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JUNE, 1912

MAGAZINE

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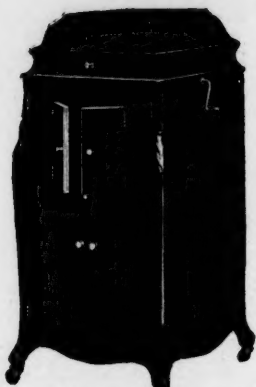


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Vol. XV

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 3

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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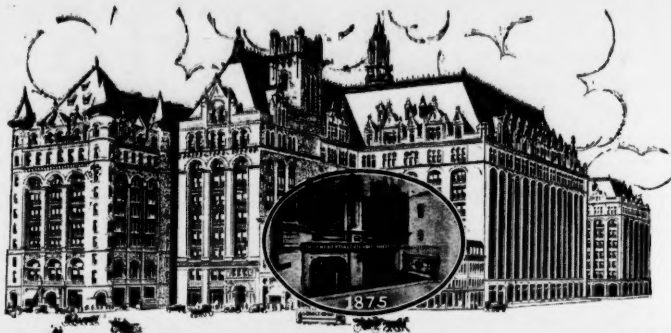
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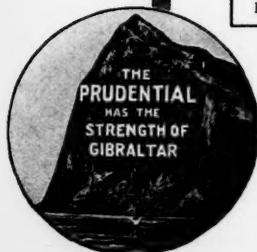
Annual
Statement
Dec. 31
1911

Assets, over	- - - - -	259 Million Dollars
Liabilities, nearly	- - - - -	241 Million Dollars
Income in 1911, over	- - - - -	81 Million Dollars
Capital and Surplus, over	- - - - -	18 Million Dollars
Paid Policyholders in 1911, over	- - - - -	27 Million Dollars

**Total Paid Policyholders since organization,
plus amount held at interest to their
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Life Insurance Issued and Paid for in 1911, over	440 Million Dollars
Increase in Paid-for Insurance in Force, over	167 Million Dollars
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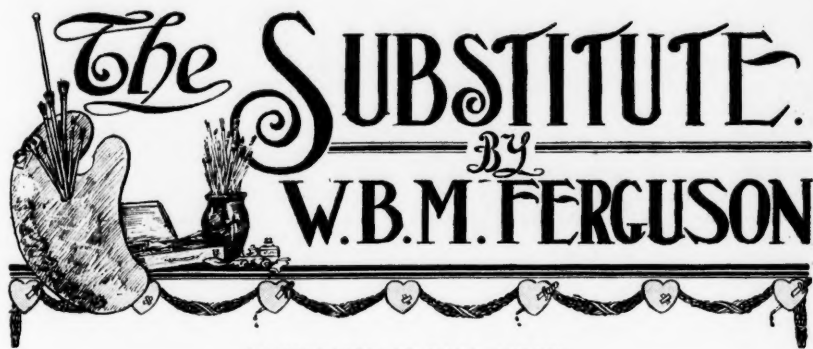
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 15

JUNE, 1912

NUMBER 3



ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

CHAPTER I.

MRS. BLUGSBY was satisfied the room would meet all requirements.

"I've been reserving it for just such a gentleman as yourself, sir," she asserted, folding her hands with easy confidence on the blue check apron guarding her prominent façade. "Not that I couldn't have rented it a hundred times over to commercial gentlemen. But the dead and gone Mr. B. was a artist himself, and so I owe somethin' to the perfession—in a spiritual way, as I might say, and not because Mr. B. got his bread and butter out of it. And so I says to the commercial gentlemen: 'The rest of my house is open to you, but this room is reserved for the perfession. From the dead and gone Mr. B. down, only artist gentlemen have used it, and only artist gentlemen *will* use it.' And I've been true to the perfession, sir, though I've been offered over twenty a week by a very rich commercial gentleman who just doted on skylights—and me being a widow with her livin' to make in this hard city."

"Well, I suppose we all must sacrifice in some shape or fashion for art's sake," said Jack Grahame gravely. "I don't quite see why your very rich commercial gentleman should dote on skylights. However, perhaps he was an amateur astronomer. There was a time when I valued skylights chiefly as the probable means of outflanking an overdue board bill."

"Oh, I'm sure you're much too nice a lookin' gentleman to have ever done anythin' like that," simpered Mrs. Blugsby. "Trust me for sizing up dead beats at a slant."

Grahame leisurely scanned the room. Sixtieth Street was certainly very much uptown even for New York's swiftly moving northward march. If there had only been a vacancy in the old Tenth Street Studio, that senile pile of red brick that has for over twenty years housed and nourished famous—and infamous—children of the brush. But every square inch of floor space was occupied, and somehow Grahame had owned a dislike for the fat, red-faced houses in the adjacent neighborhood.

They reminded him too much of the long ago. Although there is some satisfaction, once we have surmounted the hill of endeavor, in looking back upon our trail, the vista does not improve with proximity. Dead hopes, old memories, and unattained ambitions are there to greet us.

As New York, unlike Paris, owns no definitely bounded Latin Quarter, there existed no valid reason why an artist, seeking light and space, should not locate north of Fifty-ninth Street. For Grahame was not of the type which harangues about the æsthetic sensibilities, smokes vile tobacco, works little, and idles much; nor had he ever been. And so it was quite by chance that, strolling up Park Avenue, he happened to see in a side street Mrs. Blugsby's neat little sign bearing the legend: "Furnished Rooms."

"I like the place," he now said frankly, finishing his inspection. "I only want it temporarily, and as a studio. Suppose we say fifteen a week?"

"Eighteen," said the landlady promptly, fingering her pelicanlike throat. "And that's five off for the sake of the perfession."

Grahame smiled, but said nothing.

"I do want you to have it," continued Mrs. Blugsby, with emotion, "for I'm very partic'ler regarding my roomers."

Grahame remained unmoved by this delicate tribute to his personal appearance.

"Say eighteen, then," he murmured good-humoredly, "but don't imagine I think it's worth the additional three. I'm just doing a little extra for the sake of the profession."

He produced a stylographic pen, and idly tested it upon his thumb, while Mrs. Blugsby, scenting the check which would bind the contract, hastened to place a chair by a rosewood escrutoire, which she carefully polished with the blue check apron.

"I lost over a month's rent on this room by my last tenant," she began conversationally, perhaps to divert Grahame's attention, in order that he might not repent of his bargain, for he was

thumbing the check book in an undecided manner. "They slep' in it, too."

Grahame's eyes were fastened upon a small water color which, hanging in the shadow of a poorly engraved "Friedland, 1807," evaded the fugitive sunbeams playing at hide and seek with an uncertain sky.

"Indeed," he commented abstractedly.

"Yes, sir, and a nice-appearin' couple they was, too, but there's no going by looks, as the conductor says to the artist's model when she couldn't pay her fare."

Grahame was still busy with the little water color hanging in the corner, and in the graveyard of memory a buried incident—nay, episode—was seeking resurrection. To Mrs. Blugsby's profound disapprobation pen and check book were suddenly replaced in their owner's pocket, as he sauntered over to the picture. Instinctively he knew where to look for the "S. G. Del. 1882." He was certain he would find them in vermilion under the rock that monopolized the right-hand foreground.

"That," said Mrs. Blugsby, relieved that the check book had been merely temporarily diverted from its mission, "is a bit of a thing that belonged to the young couple I was tellin' you of. The girl thought a lot of it, I guess. Her husband done it, I suppose, when he was a kid. It ain't much good, is it? It's all I've to show for a month's board and lodgin'—they stung me proper."

"You might tell me something about the owner of this," said Grahame casually, producing an old pipe and handful of cheap tobacco, which he carried loose in his coat pocket.

After a formal and polite request if he might smoke, he seated himself, and fixedly eyed the landlady. The pipe and cheap plug cut were depraved associates of former days which still held sovereignty, despite the wiles of their more expensive rivals.

Mrs. Blugsby began to thumb her chin. When excited or interested, she owned the habit of pulling the very loose skin of her throat, and permitting it to flap back in a highly diverting manner, that lent a certain accen-

tuation to the climax or point of her narrative. Grahame mentally classified this as a form of gossip's fidgets.

"They come here six months ago last Toosday," began the landlady, temporarily blind to the lure of the check book in the gratifying knowledge that she had an interested audience. "I remember the day well, for Mr. Hock—him as has the hall room—was short in his rent, and me being that soft-hearted—"

"But about the owner of the picture, Mrs. Blugsby."

"Yes, sir; I'm comin' to them. You must let me tell my story in my own way, for I get that flustered if any one interrupts I don't know if I'm here or there—as one of them low-built German dogs says when he turns the corner.

"As I was sayin', they come six months ago last Toosday, and a nice-lookin' couple they was, too—otherwise they wouldn't have put the jody on me, you can bet that! I stretched a point, and gave them their meals here, though I don't believe in boardin', for there's no money in it, and less thanks, and though I forbid eatin' in my rooms, they all carry stuff up on the sly, and once I caught Mr. Hock—him as has the hall room—boilin' coffee on the chandelier, and me paying ten a month for gas to them robbers in the trust."

"And so they came here six months ago?"

"Yes, as I was sayin'. And paid reg'ler for one month, though I never seen either of them do no work. Then he went away, and his wife told me he'd went to Boston or somewhere to paint somethin' or other, and she said he'd be back in a week.

"Well, she said that every day for a month, and me lettin' the rent go, though I pay twelve hundred a year to an old stuff who don't need it, and who you couldn't pry loose from a cent with a chisel if you was to try.

"As the days passed, the young lady got white, and her eyes bigger and bigger, until they looked as if they'd gone on growin' after she'd left off. But she kep' her smile in workin' order—I'll say that for her—and she always told me

he'd be back soon. 'He's working so hard, Mrs. Blugsby,' she says, just like that. 'It's a big commission, and it means everything to him, and he's worked so hard to be a success.'

"'Humph!' says I to myself. 'I guess he's workin' overtime to do honest folks like me.' And I kep' a sharp eye on the young lady, makin' sure she wouldn't go off some night with her trunks. They're up to all such dirty tricks like that, and once I had a roomer come here with a couple of trunks that had nothin' but bricks in 'em, and he left them for a month's rent. Them was the days before I got wise to the stuff they try to pull on you in a big city like this.

"So I was just waitin' until the back rent come up to what their belongings was worth before I sent the young lady packing. I should have give her the bounce, first overdue rent, but I'm that soft-hearted with all my trials—and a lot of trouble the failin' caused me, too, and many a dollar I've lost by it!

"All this time my fine gentleman had never wrote, for I knows every letter that comes into this house. I run a respectable one, and I see my roomers don't hold no correspondence with them they shouldn't. Why, once I had a roomer—nice young lady, too, who looked like a saint if ever there was one—and just because I happened by accident to open a letter of hers, and I finds she's been— Well, I don't like to say things against my own sect. But she was a fine piece of baggage!

"Well, of course, I speaks to the young lady about her husband not writin' her, and she draws herself up and says: 'I told him not to, for he's far too busy.'

"'Seems to me he wouldn't strain himself by droppin' a line,' I says.

"At that she gets up, and has the impudence to say: 'Mrs. Blugsby, I'm not in the habit of discussing my private affairs with strangers, least of all my landlady. What my husband does or does not do is my concern, and mine only, and I beg you to remember that.'

"'Oh,' says I, 'is that so? Mebbe you'd like me to be a stranger. I've



He turned abruptly, and hurried down the stairs.

known folks before this who wished to see my back after they'd stung me good and proper. But I know when roomers is tryin' to put the jody on me, and don't you forget it!

"That's what I give her straight, for ingratitood is the despicablest of things, and though I'm soft-hearted I know when I'm being used as a good thing, thank Gawd!"

"Continue, please," said Grahame, smoking hard.

"Well, the young lady goes very white, and looks me fair in the eye. I'll say that for her that her looks was never snoopin' round your feet.

"It's quite unnecessary, Mrs. Blugsby," she says, "for you to remind me of the fact that our rent is overdue. Re-assure yourself—"

"That's all right, madam," says I. 'Jollyin' myself may feel all right, but it won't pay the landlord rent day. I

haven't asked for it, have I? But if I was you I'd have the police department get after your wanderin' boy—"

"She cuts me off, lookin' like a young she tiger.

"Good night, Mrs. Blugsby!" she says, just like that, as if her voice was frostbitten.

"At that I gets my temper up, for I have a bit of a one, though you'd never know it. 'Madam,' I says, 'only that I'm a lady I could say some things you wouldn't like. But this is my house, and I'm payin' good money for it fair and square, and if some people would only do the same, and put up less of a front when a favor's bein' done 'em, this world would be a better and happier place. I'm not a hard lady when I'm treated respectful, madam, but now I give you a week's notice to pay up or leave. And I tell you, meanin' no disrespect, that your husband's a desertin' "

villain, and the sooner you get the law on him the better for you." And before she could answer back I goes out.

"Day after that, bless me, if there didn't come a letter for her in a man's writin', and she mentions in a cold sort of way about her husband bein' home soon. But I have my suspicions, bein' used to all the dodges of roomers, though I said nothin'. It didn't take much hard work to find out from the stationer's around the corner that a young lady had him address a letter to a Mrs. Grahame livin' here. She must have took me for a dummy if she thought I hadn't noticed the post-office mark. But I said nothin', just waitin' my time.

"A day or two later after she's been out all day, she says to me that, beginnin' next week, she will pay me the first installment of what she owes. Knowin' my soft heart is makin' a fool of me again, I says: 'All right.'

"I can't pay you very much," she says, 'but I give you my word that every cent shall be paid if you'll only give me time. I cannot leave here until I do.'

"Mrs. Grahame, I never was a hard lady," I says. 'You know that. Pay me what you can, and I'll give you all the time you want.'

"She goes out next mornin' early, and then I know she's got a job. I don't know what she dragged down a week, but it must have been pretty fair, for she paid me every Saturday night. I gave her the little room across the hall for a dollar less than it fetches, and she ate outside.

"Well, two months she works steady, and it was the best thing for her; took her mind off herself and that loafer of a desertin' husband. About once a week a fake letter come for her, and I never says I know who wrote it.

"Then one mornin', durin' the awful hot spell—the kids were sailin' boats in the asphalt street, it was that hot—Mrs. Grahame didn't go out at her usual hour—half past seven—and, thinkin' she was oversleepin', I knocked at the door. There was no answer, and I goes in. There she was in bed, talkin' to herself at a great rate, and her eyes looked so

big and scary, and her face was that hollow and white that I was frightened. Her cheek was so hot it burned my hand.

"I could do nothin' with her, and so I run for the corner cop, and he turned in a hurry call for the ambulance. The doctor come, and got off a big lie. He said it was a case of slow starvation, and—and——" Here Mrs. Blugsby wiped her eyes. "He s-said Mrs. Grahame had been dyin' for weeks under my eyes! What do you think of that? That's what he said—the snippy, white-coated little pill, and after all I'd done for her!"

"And Mrs. Grahame—d-did she—die?"

Mrs. Blugsby started at the harsh, colorless voice.

"I don't know, sir. What time have I——"

"What hospital was she taken to?"

"Presbyterian."

"When?"

"Last Monday three weeks ago——"

She stopped, then demanded: "Why are you lookin' at me like that?" For her nice, easy-going, good-humored gentleman had changed to a thing of stone.

Rapidly Grahame filled out a check, and laid it on the little rosewood escritoire.

"This," he said, "will meet all debts incurred by Mrs. Grahame. I'll have the expressman call for such of her belongings as may be here. I will *not* take the room, Mrs. Blugsby. I think that, instead of sacrificing for art's sake, if you did a little for the sake of humanity and common decency——"

He turned abruptly, and hurried down the stairs, leaving as legacy the check, his card, and the memory of a white, passion-seared face.

CHAPTER II.

A cab turned into Seventieth Street from Park Avenue, and halfway down the block halted on the north side, before a rambling building of dull-red brick that occupied the entire block. Jack Grahame swung through the portecochère, ascended a flight of gray steps,

and found himself in the Presbyterian Hospital.

On his left was a caged inclosure, whose bars guarded a neat, prim-faced girl; fronting him the stone steps rose to meet a long corridor, running east and west, in which were several wooden benches. At once a peculiar odor assailed him; a smell almost tangible, and which he recognized as a blending of ether, iodoform, and carbolic.

To the girl in the caged inclosure Grahame stated his business and relationship to the patient he had come to visit, after which he was promptly referred to one of the long wooden benches in the corridor.

Seated on one of these, he busied himself with the buff walls and marble floors. It was the first time he had been in a hospital, and his subconscious habit of observation asserted itself while his thoughts were elsewhere. The place was very quiet, but it was not the holy calm of church or cathedral—the calmness of stagnation. Back of it all, Grahame could sense the untiring energy and machinelike precision which made possible this seeming inertia. It was as if he were on the quarter-deck of a beautiful white battleship, and far below could hear the dull throb of the engines, his imagination picturing the stokers at the furnaces.

He could now imagine the busy dispensary of this hospital, attending daily to the needs of its hundreds of non-resident patients; the operating pavilion and theater, where the clinic looked down from its Colosseumlike aerie upon the glass tables where a visiting surgeon, surrounded by his staff of expert nurses, employed scalpel and antiseptics with veteran hand and brain.

He could imagine the grinding routine of the probationer on duty from seven until eight; the fresh-faced, well-bred girls in neat blue uniforms and white Eton collars, who scrubbed floors and instruments like any menial; who practically soaked in carbolic wash; whose portion was the slavish, unlovely work of the beginner. Then, their six months achieved, they became regular members of the school; wore for three years a

blue-and-white striped uniform, attended lectures, and nursed the unclean and unwell of every nation; learning by practice and theory the science of their chosen profession.

Grahame caught himself wondering what material condition, what mental attitude, caused them to select such a hard, self-sacrificing rôle in life; victims of discipline and schedule compared to which West Point is a bed of ease. Was it predilection, a means of earning a living, or a sincere, vital desire to be of service to humanity? He wondered how long he would submit to the sovereignty of rigid discipline. For how long he would rise at six, retire at ten, and daily prove loyal to a twelve hours' hard, monotonous grind, both physical and mental, whether or not he felt in the humor.

How long would Spencer's ego have survived? He who had deserted a wife because evidently he was capable of earning but for one? This thing that had been done was typically Spencerian. Spencer had not deliberately studied for the rôle of blackguard; few men do. Conditions had cornered him, and, true to his character, he had taken the line of least resistance, even though it led to dishonor.

Grahame felt his duty in the matter simple. The family honor had been shattered by his brother, and he must piece it together as best he could. He would see that Eileen was provided for, and he would bring back Spencer and make him act the man. As for himself, he felt that time and man's law had taught him renunciation. His old love for Eileen was a thing of the past. He had not seen her since she went honeymooning to Paris, and, of course, marriage changes the affections. Now she was merely his sister-in-law—Spencer's wife. He could but regard her as he would any one who might happen to fill that position.

Notwithstanding all this self-assurance, Grahame felt his heart stir to unusual activity when an officer appeared and requested him to follow her.

Miss Marbury, in spotless white, a little three-cornered muslin cap crown-

ing her dark hair, led the way to the elevator.

"May I ask what exactly is the matter with Mrs. Grahame?" asked the man, as they waited for the car.

"I think the primary cause was starvation."

Grahame, for some reason, felt himself flushing as Miss Marbury's steady brown eyes met his.

"I only heard of my sister-in-law's condition an hour ago," he murmured, half apologetically, half defiantly. "You know anything that I can do I'll be only too happy." He was conscious that this was an unnecessary avowal. "I suppose she could have a private ward?"

"Yes, but she could receive no more attention than where she is," replied Miss Marbury kindly. "We have all taken an unusual interest in Mrs. Grahame. I must caution you against all excitement."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"It's a peculiar case," nodded Miss Marbury. "The house physician says Mrs. Grahame has no desire to live. She doesn't refuse food, of course, but the spirit, incentive, is lacking, if you can understand. She's very low to-day. Psychology enters into many a case, you know. We must have the *desire* to live—that is practically half the battle."

Grahame checked an impulse to confide in this quiet, self-reliant girl. It wasn't that he did not repose trust, or that her high official position prohibited her private sympathy and understanding from asserting themselves. Rather, in fact, on first acquaintance he had seldom met one in whom he had been more willing to confide. This was something, for Grahame was neither of the sponge-like species that absorbs everything and gives nothing, nor the sievelike, through which all confidences leak. But he felt that Eileen had been loyal to her husband, and that loyalty kept at such a price must be honored. Spencer he did not consider.

The elevator stopped at the third floor, and as Grahame emerged a white-marble notice confronted him, conveying the intelligence that the wide door on his right gave admittance to the sec-

ond division of the woman's medical ward. Down the sides of the long, wide room were ranged at intervals high, white cots, each with its attendant screen of the same negative color. At the head of each cot hung a chart, giving a "history" of the occupant's case. At the head of the room, before a glass-topped table, sat a nurse.

Grahame's searching eyes took in a long vista of night-robed womanhood; some, with hair loose upon their shoulders, were idling with fancywork; others, prone on pillows, turned restless, feverish eyes upon him. But he had scarcely time to feel embarrassed before the head nurse approached, and he was silently following in her rubber-heeled wake.

She circumnavigated a white screen in the far corner of the room, and Grahame, following closely, looked down into the eyes of the former Eileen Carstairs.

Eileen's tawny hair framed the pale oval of a face whose keynote was listening expectancy. Excitement had brought to her cheek an unwonted flush that lent a fictitious appearance of health. Grahame drew a quick breath as he noted the pitifully thin arms and unusually prominent collar bone—all the wreck and ruin of the girl he had known and loved in the long ago.

During this time he had not spoken, nor had she. There was a something about her fixed stare that fascinated him; a something in the gray depths of her eyes which he had never known. It seemed almost as if she were asleep, and he caught himself approaching the cot, as if in fear of arousing her.

"Eileen!" he said, in sudden alarm. "Don't you know me?" He was now kneeling by the cot.

Instantly she seemed to pulse and vibrate with life, and, before Grahame quite knew how it happened, her arms were about his neck, and she had drawn his face to hers.

"Oh, I knew you would come!" she whispered. "I knew you would come to me!" She repeated it over and over in fierce ecstasy. "I knew it was only a matter of time! Oh, you will never,

never know how I have longed and watched; waited and hoped for you, dear! When they said you had come, when I heard your voice—Oh, Spencer!

She buried her face in his arms, and though the tears would not come, Grahame felt the whole small, tense figure vibrate with unuttered sobs. Tremor after tremor convulsed her pitifully meager being, until she quivered as a young tree quivers, and finally yields dominion to the fury of the storm. Her arms were still about his neck, as if after a long and weary search they had found their own, and now held it against the world.

Grahame looked down upon the very small armful he held, and his jaw set. Once upon a time, as all fairy tales begin, he had asked nothing more from life than the right to hold this girl as he now held her.

How long Grahame knelt there, Spencer's wife in his arms, he did not know or care. Gradually the convulsive shudders became less frequent, and finally died away in a long, fluttering sigh of ineffable exhaustion and happiness. At length strong hands gently unloosed his arms, and Miss Marbury restored her now sleeping patient to the pillow.

Grahame arose, no trace of self-consciousness in his bearing; rather there was apparent a certain mastery of self which heretofore had been absent. He gradually became aware of a bulky, fiery-haired gentleman in snowy duck, who, with a deftness seemingly foreign to his physique, took Mrs. Grahame's passive hand between hairy finger and thumb. He nodded to Miss Marbury, and whispered a word to the head nurse, and Grahame tiptoed in their wake as they again circumnavigated the white screen.

"Doctor Murgatroyd says her pulse is almost normal," confided Miss Marbury, with evident satisfaction, as Grahame and she stepped into the corridor.

"I'm very glad," he replied mechanically. "May I have a word with you?"

She led the way to the visitors' room, closing the door.

"How and when did Mrs. Grahame

become blind?" asked Grahame harshly, standing with folded arms.

"Why— Didn't you know she was blind?"

"I did not, Miss Marbury. I had no reason to believe Mrs. Grahame the victim of such an affliction. It—it has been a great shock to me."

"Would you care to see Doctor Murgatroyd?" gently asked the nurse, after a moment's silence. "He will be able to give you a history of the case—I mean, tell you just what may be expected."

Grahame thanked her, and she left the room, the house physician entering a moment later. He looked hard and unfavorably at Grahame, while he reflectively pulled the lobe of a fiery ear.

"Mrs. Grahame's loss of eyesight was the result of measles," he said gruffly at length; "but she never would have contracted such a virulent attack if her physical condition had been halfway normal. She has just been transferred from the isolation ward. When she was brought in I never saw such a case of emaciation and malnutrition, barring a famine-stricken district. It's barbarous that such things can happen in a supposedly civilized country, and among Christian people."

"It is," agreed Grahame, in a colorless voice. "I didn't learn of my sister-in-law's condition until an hour ago, and then quite by accident. I'd no reason to believe her the victim of privation in any form."

The burly house physician's expression slowly altered, as he stared searchingly at Grahame.

"Then you're not Mrs. Grahame's husband?" he asked bluntly.

"Why, no; her brother-in-law. I thought you knew that. I stated my relationship to the patient on entering the hospital."

"The head nurse merely said Mr. Grahame was here, and I inferred you were the missing husband," said Murgatroyd slowly. "You don't mind if I discuss this case frankly with you?"

"On the contrary, I take your personal interest as a favor. Can you spare the time?"

The fiery-haired doctor nodded, adding: "Yes, we all have taken an unusual interest in Mrs. Grahame, quite aside from our professional attitude. We're case-hardened, you know, and it's seldom a patient—especially a free one—arouses our sympathies to such a pitch, but we've been a bunch of sentimentalists over Mrs. Grahame. Though she said nothing, we knew from the first that she was the victim of desertion,

house in which Mrs. Grahame lived, we learned the name of the latter's husband, his vocation, and the city in which he was understood to reside——"

"Yes; Mrs. Blugsby, from whom I learned the details, said my brother had gone to Boston. He's an artist, and, I believe, had a commission to execute some paintings there."

"Do you know this for a fact?"

"No; that is merely what the land-



"Eileen!" he said, in sudden alarm. "Don't you know me?"

and, though such cases are all too common, she, by her personality, won us from the beginning. You cannot imagine how devotedly she loves her husband; how loyal she is to him, never breathing a reproach even in delirium. We soon saw that her life was entirely wrapped up in him, and that his presence alone would give her the desire to live. It's an actual fact that a person can die of a broken heart, and that was the primary complaint in her case.

"From the landlady of the rooming

lady was told by Mrs. Grahame. I can't vouch for its truth. I haven't seen my brother for two years—since his marriage. Letters which I wrote were unanswered. I thought his wife and he were still in Paris, where they went on their honeymoon. On the death of my father, my brother was left something over one hundred thousand, and so the idea of their being without funds was farthest from my thoughts. Spencer is younger, and we have no living immediate relatives other than each other."

"Well, we made inquiries in Boston—through the police and hospitals," said Murgatroyd, pulling his ear. "We even advertised in the papers; but nothing came of it. Mrs. Grahame was no more anxious to see her husband than were we. If he didn't show up I knew her last chance of pulling through was gone."

"It's extraordinary and—er—gratifying for a hospital to go to all this trouble," said Grahame slowly. "To whom am I chiefly indebted—you, doctor?"

"No," said the other gruffly. "Miss Marbury's just chock-full of sentiment, and, though she's taken quite a fancy to Mrs. Grahame, she'd have done the same for any one else. So, you see," he added abruptly, "it doesn't seem probable your brother is the victim of an accident. The case looks like premeditated and chronic desertion, and we never expected to see him again. Therefore, when I heard Mr. Grahame was here I thought it a miracle—one of those sweet things that happen only in storybooks. And now my skepticism is verified, for you are not her husband. Yet, Mr. Grahame, you appear to have fulfilled the part of your brother very satisfactorily. There's a remarkable change for the better in Mrs. Grahame's condition. Her temperature's down with her pulse, and she's in the first normal sleep she's had since being admitted here. I didn't think the presence of such a relation—of any one, in fact, but her husband—would produce such results, and I'm just tickled to death."

"Then you didn't hear or witness my meeting with Mrs. Grahame?"

"Certainly not, sir. No outsider did. We wouldn't think of intruding on your privacy," said the house physician, scowling and pulling his ear.

"I didn't mean any offense," said Grahame. "I wasn't aware of what rules there might be concerning patients and visitors, and Miss Marbury, the head nurse, and you, were in the vicinity." He eyed the doctor for a long minute, and then suddenly reached a decision. "My reason for asking is this," he continued slowly. "Mrs. Gra-

hame's condition has changed so much for the better simply because she believes me to be her husband."

CHAPTER III.

"What do you mean?" asked Murgatroyd, staring at the other. "How could she make such a mistake? It's impossible."

"Why? Isn't she blind?"

"Yes. Yes, of course. But she'd know her husband's voice, if not yours."

"Spencer's voice and mine are alike," said Grahame, leaning back in his chair. "I don't say they're precisely alike, but they're of the same timbre, and pitched in the same key. That's not unusual among members of the same family, I dare say. We used to fool people in the old days with the resemblance, and I remember particularly one occasion when Miss Carstairs—that was my sister-in-law's name before her marriage—talked to me at some length, thinking I was Spencer. Of course, she didn't see me at the time, for there's no physical resemblance between my brother and me; at least, nothing more than a vague family likeness, and, aside from our voices, we'd never in the world be mistaken for each other."

"Vocal *Dromios*, eh?" exclaimed the doctor. "It's not difficult to believe, for I've run across similar cases in my time. This is startling news, Mr. Grahame, and it opens up very grave possibilities."

"I'm aware of that, doctor. The possibilities are so grave, to my mind, that I thought it best to confide in you. You've been exceedingly kind to Mrs. Grahame, and I feel you'll advise me with the sole view as to her welfare. When I saw her here to-day I'd no idea she was blind, though I rather wondered at the peculiar stare of the eyes, and her attitude of listening expectancy. When I asked if she knew me—I did not mention my name, thinking it superfluous—she threw her arms about my neck, and called me Spencer."

"You haven't the least doubt she thinks you her husband?"

"Not the slightest. It's apparent the head nurse—who, perhaps, was ignorant of my relationship to Mrs. Grahame—

merely told her Mr. Grahame was here, and, of course, she thought only of her husband. No, from the way she spoke and—er—acted, there's no doubt she believes me to be Spencer."

"Bad—very bad!" scowled the house physician. "Did you know Mrs. Grahame intimately before her marriage?"

"No, not very," said Grahame, blushing slightly. "What I wish to know is this: If Mrs. Grahame discovers I'm not Spencer, what will be the result?"

"I wouldn't be answerable for her life," said Murgatroyd emphatically. "Perhaps you may better understand what a relapse would result from the shock when I confess we were thinking seriously of deluding, if possible, Mrs. Grahame into the belief her husband to be slowly convalescing in a Boston hospital. Yes, and were even going to read her fake letters from him."

"What?"

"We believed the extremity warranted the deception," continued the house physician, pulling viciously at his ear. "Of course, it would have been awfully irregular, but then there's nothing regular about this case. It seemed as if Mrs. Grahame must go under, and we thought she might as well die happy in the belief her husband still loved her; that his absence had been due to his suffering an accident. We were going to invent a story of lost identity, and all that, you know. Then," he added slowly, "I hoped the news might perhaps give her the desire to live—a vital factor that's been lacking. When she had completely recovered, it would be time enough to confess the deception. Meanwhile the miracle might happen, and her husband show up. That's the way our thoughts were running, Mr. Grahame. The whole thing pivots on your brother."

"My thoughts have been the same as yours," said Grahame, "but I wished your medical opinion. Mrs. Grahame must continue to believe I'm Spencer until she's entirely recovered."

"Have I suggested this course to you?" asked the house physician. "I mean, has my contemplated deception influenced you?"

"No," said Grahame quietly. "I had already made up my mind."

"You think you can sustain the part, Mr. Grahame? Remember, it's not a matter to be undertaken lightly. It may be months before she will be able to hear the truth."

"I don't care how long it may be, doctor. The longer the better, for it will give me time in which to find my brother. I don't mean in person, for I will stay with Mrs. Grahame."

"Even after she's able to leave here—providing she recovers?"

"Yes, even after she's able to leave here," said Grahame, meeting the other's hard stare. "We can live in some quiet, out-of-the-way place for the time being, and, to all appearances, be man and wife. That would be necessary; otherwise, were I known to my neighbors as her brother-in-law, she would soon discover the deception. You see, the idea presents no insuperable difficulties; rather, conditions make it remarkably easy. I am not married, and have no immediate relatives. We can go to some place where we aren't known; a country or seaside town, under plea of Mrs. Grahame's health."

"But concerning Mrs. Grahame herself?" demanded Murgatroyd. "Even before the time comes when Mrs. Grahame is once more herself, there'll be many an occasion when you will find your rôle exceedingly difficult."

"I've considered all that," said Grahame, not pretending to misunderstand the other. "This isn't a snapshot decision, though there is no alternative. I've thought the matter over carefully, and I would not attempt the rôle were I not absolutely sure of myself."

Murgatroyd remarked that the best of us are only human, adding: "And Mrs. Grahame is by no means an ordinary woman. It will be mighty hard to act the part of your brother; awaken no suspicion in her mind, while yet being in reality merely her brother-in-law."

"I don't think it will be so difficult," said Grahame reflectively; "at least, not for a while. I imagine it will be a month or so before she is convalescent."

In that time I hope Spencer will be located."

"And if he is never located?"

"Then my sister-in-law must be told. If he is alive, and I find him, he will return to his wife."

"If he has ceased to love her, she'll get a bad bargain," said Murgatroyd bluntly. "However, it's no use going into the many possible difficulties of the matter; the main thing is to save, if we can, Mrs. Grahame's life, and I'm convinced this deception must be sustained for the time being. We'll let the future take care of itself. There's one thing you must remember: Mrs. Grahame's loss of eyesight may not be permanent—at least, that is my opinion. Very often in such cases it's merely temporary, though I'm not prepared to say she will eventually recover it, or, if so, just what period must elapse before that takes place. Perhaps an operation will be necessary; perhaps not. At all events, this will place a certain time limit—indefinite though it is—on our deception and your brother's return."

"I'm very glad to hear that at least you extend some hope," said Grahame heartily. "Was she blind when brought here?"

"No. She was down with a bad case of measles, and her vitality was exhausted. It's clear she was cutting food expenses to a minimum, and had been for a long time. That, and overwork, combined with worry and consequent loss of sleep, made a wreck of her."

"I'm glad I've had this talk with you," said Grahame at length. "You're the logical one in whom to confide, for I wished some one familiar with the circumstances to be aware of what I decided to do. Some honorable person," he added, looking at Murgatroyd.

"And I'm glad some honorable person came along to attempt what you're going to attempt," returned the house physician, looking at Grahame.

CHAPTER IV.

The Grahames had lived in Colchester for a month. Colchester is a small town near Great South Bay, the majority of

whose hardy citizens devote their energies to the oyster industry, for Blue Point is in the neighborhood.

Grahame, who had once spent an autumn in Colchester when he was dabbling in seascapes, selected the town because it was the first place meeting all requirements that occurred to him; Eileen required sea air, and the exigencies of his rôle demanded an out-of-the-way place, far from the general line of travel, yet near New York; a place where it would be extremely unlikely an old friend or acquaintance would drop in and ask awkward questions. He wished to obviate, if possible, the necessity of admitting any more people into his confidence, for then his secret would cease to be one.

Thus far Doctor Murgatroyd and one other shared the secret with him; this other was a middle-aged trained nurse whom, at Grahame's suggestion, the house physician secured for his now almost-recovered patient. Grahame had insisted upon this nurse, Mrs. James, being intrusted with the secret that he and Mrs. Grahame were not man and wife, for he knew the world, and was farsighted. Mrs. James could be trusted implicitly, and would also fill the rôle of chaperon. She was to be Mrs. Grahame's constant companion, and assist the deception in every way possible.

That chance visit to Mrs. Blugsby's had made an acute angle in Jack Grahame's life, and he wondered at the trivial circumstances which had produced it—if he had not happened to turn down that particular street; if he had not happened to notice Mrs. Blugsby's neat little sign; if that water color had not been hanging where it was. Grahame, as he had informed Murgatroyd, had no idea Spencer and his wife had returned to New York, and when he first saw and recognized the painting it seemed impossible it could be the one he had in mind. A mere daub, it had been executed when Spencer was a child of ten, and by his parents was cherished among the family heirlooms—the work of a juvenile prodigy. Jack had just cause to remember the picture, as his own small artistic beginnings had been com-

pared with this chef d'œuvre, much to the latter's renown.

In fact, Jack had suffered by comparison with his brilliant young brother all through infancy, youth, and early manhood. He always referred to Spencer as his brother, but they were merely half brothers; the children of one mother, but different fathers. Jack was the elder by five years. To him his father was a vague memory; a dream creation; some one who had once tossed him to the ceiling, and brought him a wonderful monkey that scaled a pole, and accomplished other diverting feats. His sole recollection of his father, John Fielding, was comprised in these two incidents.

When, after a wedded life of some three years, pneumonia carried off John Fielding, his relict did not wait overlong before remarrying. People talked much; they said her haste was indecent, that she should have at least deferred to public opinion by mourning decently and in order for the conventional period allotted widowhood. Of course, they knew she had never loved Fielding, who was much her senior; young Spencer Grahame, society's miniature painter, was more her kind.

And for once, at any rate, the people were right. Young Nancy Kingdon, talented, accomplished, beautiful, and a comparative pauper, had always loved Spencer Grahame, and he her, but he was a long time winning artistic success and financial independence, and Nancy wasn't fitted for the rôle of poor man's wife, and so she married John Fielding and half a million.

In three years her purchase price had been swallowed up in a bank panic; a week later there was black crape on the hall door, and Nancy found herself a widow, a mother, and once again a comparative pauper. These were the sole assets of her shrewd little deal with fortune; the totally unexpected result of obeying the dictates of her head and not heart.

That Fielding had been a man, not good to look upon, it's true, worthy the love of the best woman, that he had worshiped her, and been a devoted, in-

dulgent husband and father, was of small solace to Nancy. She felt she had been tricked, cheated, treated shabbily. She had renounced the man she loved all to no purpose.

Nor did she cherish Jack, her son, with any additional sympathy or compound affection due to his being fatherless—a link connecting her with the dead, a sensate memory of the past. True, he was a sensate memory, but in a distinctly unpleasant manner, for she didn't wish to be constantly reminded of her glaring faux pas. And a widow, be she ever so young and alluring, finds a child a sore handicap in the marriage market. Prospective suitors look askance at shouldering a double responsibility, and many men have no liking for children not their own.

Spencer Grahame was one of these. To cap it all, Nancy hadn't wished for Jack, and, like his father, he wasn't good to look upon. He wasn't a pretty baby, nor would he ever make a pretty man. His nose, mouth, and chin were too big, and he had an uncomfortable trick of staring at people as if he could see right through them, and was judicially reaching a verdict as to their character. He was an "old man's child"—grave, and wise, and quiet beyond his years. His eyes were the one feature above criticism. Nancy took no joy in him; quite lost patience with him at an early stage, and finished by barely tolerating his presence.

She loved gayety, noise, and display in a refined sort of way, for there was nothing garish about her tastes. She was young, brimful of vitality and the joy of living, and these are youth's rightful heritage. But Nancy carried youth's immature tastes and viewpoint with her through life; long after that period when experience replaces them with the substantial realities of existence. She remained superficial, shallow, existing in, and content with, externals. Men like Spencer Grahame she revered. Spencer was a pretty man; he could dance divinely, sing, play, and paint—the latter gift approached genius. He was artistic to his finger tips, with all the faults and virtues of the artist.



"I'd like to know what business this is of yours, anyway?"

Young Jack Fielding, soon after his father's death, was packed off to an infants' boarding school, and, with this obstacle successfully disposed of, Spencer Grahame and Nancy renewed their former friendship to such good purpose that they were soon married.

Spencer was now a miniature painter of recognized standing. He prospered and grew wealthy, for he could charm bored society out of the blues.

In time young Spencer came, and his advent was as welcome as Jack's had been unwelcome to Nancy. Spencer inherited a great proportion of his parents' faults, and his upbringing did not tend to correct them, for he was petted and humored to the last ditch. Perhaps another child would have been totally ruined by this adulation and favoritism, and it may speak well for Spencer that

he was neither fundamentally wicked nor vicious. His most glaring fault—a and perhaps his sole one—was a glorified selfishness and naïve egoism; a crown which he wore with rare grace and distinction, and of which he appeared totally unconscious. He never demanded, but took and accepted, as if it were his divine right; and there was something so altogether winning about his manner that his world gave and questioned not.

The stepbrothers, on such occasions as they saw each other, got along very well—much better than the general run of blood brothers. Jack gave, Spencer accepted—both as if it were the one logical course to pursue. Spencer was everything Jack was

not. He was good to look upon, graceful, persuasive, accomplished. Jack was proud of him, and his envy was frank, open, and generous. The obvious preference of his mother and stepfather did not embitter nor envenom him. It seemed altogether fitting and proper that this delicate, fair-haired child, with the winning smile and gracious manners, should be bowed down to and served.

Jack admired his golden, exotic beauty, for Jack was rough-hewn of feature, and dark with the stern cragginess of the harsh Northlands. In him was a broad, dour, fighting streak, and yet, despite this and his rough exterior, he had the heart of the dreamer, mystic, and poet. He of the whole family was *the* artist; the one capable of conceiving ideals worthy of art.

Mr. Grahame and his wife never quite forgave Jack for owning this unexpected gift; all their care, attention, and money had been lavished on young Spencer, who, inheriting his father's talent, would naturally win renown in the same calling. He was sent to atelier after atelier—to Paris, Berlin, Rome; while Jack, after a mere high-school education, had been placed in the stock room of a wholesale dry-goods house.

Jack had never displayed any artistic aptitude—not since his young beginnings had been ridiculed, though this did not occur to Mr. and Mrs. Grahame. He was sensitive and shy, and their chronic indifference had caused him to live entirely within himself. No one but he knew of his dreamings, longings, plannings, ambitions, and ideals; his nights at the academy, when he was supposed to be amusing himself; his hours at the easel. To him this was not drudgery; it was the sole means of expressing, however badly, the riot of pent-up thought, feeling, and fancy which clamored for outlet. The gift of vocal eloquence was not his; he was neither orator, musician, nor writer, but the brush and palette compensated for all these.

In due time Spencer opened a studio in New York, and became rather well known as a creator of "pretty" magazine covers. He had his father's gift for painting lovely women, but he lacked the other's ability to give character and expression to a portrait. Young Spencer owned the same dainty, exquisite technique and medium; the same mastery of color; the same aptitude for working on a small scale; the same delight in taking an infinitude of pains with every trivial detail. Yet young Spencer would never be a successful portrait painter, even in miniature.

He never could quite understand wherein he failed, but the critics could. They said, and truly, that he lacked the greatest asset of the artist—soul. The painter, above all, should interpret; otherwise the camera is the better artist. Young Spencer's portraits, faultless in drawing, were no more human than colored photographs. They lacked sympathy, vitality, individuality—both of

artist and subject. They were mere masks. He had not the power to read or understand the human soul; he was lacking in creative ability. Lacking this, he lacked all.

Spencer abandoned the field of art, with a big "A," and contented himself with the more commercial branch. He liked to draw pretty women, and the public never seemed to tire of his rather insipid creations.

Meanwhile, there had come a day when a certain picture won the academy prize, and as the product of a hitherto unknown brush, the first exhibit of a student, mostly self-taught, was printed in every paper. The original was a nine-foot canvas in oils, bearing the simple legend: "Leap!" The central figure—in fact, the greater part of the foreground—was a young woman standing on the outer window ledge of a building. She was in negligee, a babe in her arms. It was night, and the high lights of the picture were centered upon her as she crouched in the reflected glare of the fire. The artist had selected a novel and exceedingly difficult perspective; it was as if the picture had been painted from the top of a higher adjoining building. The figure was necessarily foreshortened, but the face, being upturned, the remarkable expression of the eyes had been admirably brought out. Far below in the street one could just distinguish a group of firemen holding the life net, and the agony taking place in the young mother's soul, whether or not to trust her babe and herself to that awful leap, whether she could summon the necessary courage, was eloquently portrayed on the face raised in supplication to the smoke-choked heavens.

"Leap!" was the work of Jack Grahame—at an early period he had assumed the latter name, knowing no other—and though there were certain undeniable crudities, the picture received the warmest praise and commendation from the artistic world—in fact, created something of a sensation. Intense luminosity, strength, sympathy, and vitality were its fundamentals. Boldly conceived and boldly executed,

no timid, uncertain hand had wielded the brush; at a glance it seemed as if the colors had been slapped on, for Jack Grahame's technique and medium were diametrically opposed to those of Mr. Grahame and his son.

Congratulations were showered upon the former for being stepfather and putative tutor of this young artist, who, with advancing years, increasing skill and experience, would undoubtedly land in the foremost rank of American painters, for such strength and vitality as he had displayed could not wither and die.

But Mr. Grahame knew how little he deserved such reflected glory, for Jack had received neither talent nor encouragement from him. He had hewn every step of his artistic progress out of the living rock of adversity. He upon whom nothing had been lavished—nothing but neglect and indifference—had produced something which Spencer could never duplicate; something which Spencer was incapable of conceiving, aside from executing. One glance at "Leap!" had convinced the skeptical Mr. Grahame that here, in his stepson, lying unsuspected, were the spirit and feeling of the true artist, for none other than this could have portrayed the expression on that upturned face. That figure would live.

CHAPTER V.

It was some time before the completion of this remarkable first canvas that Jack Grahame met Eileen Carstairs. She was Spencer's latest model, and his studies of her had decorated several magazines. Jack, visiting the studio, met her casually, and had been strongly attracted from the first, though his ever-increasing regard took the form of an augmented reserve and diffidence. He understood Eileen was not a professional model—her naiveté, charm, and fresh young beauty had already convinced him of that—but a friend whom Spencer had induced to come to New York and pose for him.

Spencer wasn't communicative concerning her past, and Jack never knew her intimately enough to prompt confidences. He understood, however, that

Spencer had met her during one of his sketching trips; that she was the daughter of a minister; that her sole living relative was a brother; the calling or profession of the latter, where he resided, was unknown to Jack.

It was apparent to the latter that the relations between Spencer and his model were not those of artist and subject, nor yet those of mere friends; even a casual observer could not fail to notice that Eileen was in love with Spencer, and that he was simply wild over her.

Spencer resented Jack's visits to the studio, and finally accused him of attempting to win Eileen's affection. This charge was productive of an open tilt, the first the brothers had ever had. Spencer was very angry and irritable, and did not wisely choose his words. The mere fact that any one, Jack least of all, should attempt to thwart his desires, interfere in any manner with his plans, was enough to inflame his ego.

"What are you coming around to the studio every day for?" he demanded. "You didn't use to be so all-fired affectionate. And see here, Jack, Miss Carstairs has been telling me you've advised her to cut her boarding house; to even leave New York, and return home. What do you mean by that?"

"Simply that a boarding-house life in New York, and this artist's-model business, isn't the thing for Miss Carstairs—not by a long shot," said Jack, steadily eying the other. "As you didn't give her the advice, I thought some one should. As I understand it, Miss Carstairs doesn't have to earn her living—at all events, not in such a calling—"

"Miss Carstairs isn't a professional model, and never will be," said Spencer angrily. "She's financially independent, for her father left her enough to live on. If she chooses to exchange her stuffy little home town of Sharon for New York, ceases to vegetate, and begins to live, that's her concern, and hers only. She's interested in art, and permits me to paint her through friendship."

"That's all very well, Spencer; but, in persuading her to come here—"

"Persuade her? Who persuaded her?"

You're talking nonsense! What do you know about it, anyway? She's of age, and came entirely of her own volition."

"It's all the same," said Jack stubbornly. "She wouldn't be here if you hadn't made her acquaintance in Sharon, and there's no dodging the consequent responsibility. Miss Carstairs is exceptionally unsophisticated and ingenuous; she isn't the kind to be turned loose in New York without a chaperon, without some older relative."

"Oh, Lord!" sneered Spencer, flinging himself about. "There you go again with your old woman's views of life. You're out of date a hundred years. Girls don't need chaperons, and they must have been a pretty bad lot in the old days if a duenna had to eternally keep an eye on them. I'd like to know what business this is of yours, anyway?"

"Just this much," said Jack; "that I refuse to recognize your right to forbid my knowing Miss Carstairs. If she's merely a friend, then she's merely a friend, and you've no right whatever to dictate or say whom she'll know and whom she'll not know. That's a question solely for her consideration. And look here, while we're on the subject of friends, I may as well say I don't like the type of people to whom you've introduced Miss Carstairs. Why, if she's a friend, don't you introduce her to some nice people? She's far and away above that crowd, and she shouldn't be asked to mix in with them. Why don't you bring her up here, and have her meet mother and the folks? Those are the kind of friends she'll appreciate."

"And she must leave her boarding house at once—it's strange you don't know the reputation of that street—and live in a decent neighborhood, with a respectable family. I think that's the least you could do for a friend. All in all, it looks as if you haven't cared particularly what kind of a reputation Miss Carstairs may pick up, solely through ignorance and innocence."

"Only a narrow, evil-minded, jealous person would say such things!" cried Spencer, white with rage. "How dare you impute to me motives——"

"I'm not imputing," said Jack dryly. "I'm merely suggesting that you haven't been very thoughtful or considerate. I wouldn't say a word if Miss Carstairs was a different type of girl. I'm merely offering a few suggestions which should have been unnecessary; which you owe it to yourself, quite aside from Miss Carstairs, to carry out without further delay. If you don't, I shall. I'm sure through preoccupation, or inexperience, perhaps, you're in danger of being classed with a certain type of man."

"I will not tolerate any interference on your part, and this espionage is ended here and now," said Spencer. "If you wish to know my right, it's that of a fiancé. Miss Carstairs has promised to marry me. There! I hope now your insatiable inquisitiveness is satisfied."

"Good!" exclaimed the other, looking his relief. "I'm very glad to hear it. I didn't mean any offense by what I said. I wasn't aware you were engaged, or contemplated being so."

"Well, I didn't mean to let it out, but you forced my hand," said Spencer sulkily. "Hang it! You're so infernally suspicious!"

"In this world we've even to avoid the appearance of evil," moodily interrupted the other. "I wasn't questioning your intentions, but showing you that through ignorance or carelessness you were exposing Miss Carstairs to quite unnecessary talk."

"Everybody knows we love each other, but I wasn't aware I had to tell you everything," said Spencer ungraciously.

"You don't, and never did," laughed Jack. "Come, don't be sore over it. I'm older than you, and imagine I know the world better. If I've put my foot in it, I'm sorry. At all events, your fiancée must now meet the folks."

"Not for the present," said Spencer emphatically, "and I expect you to keep our secret, Jack. It's enough that our reasons are good and sufficient, but I may as well confess that Julie Burr is one of them—the fundamental one. Father, you know, wants me to marry money—big money—and then Julie's folks have known ours so long."

"I don't see that waiting and secrecy will do any good," said Jack. "A man must make his own choice, and abide by it, when it comes to marriage, no matter what his parents' preferences may be. You'll be doing the marrying, not father. I'd tell him straight up and down, and be done with it, if I were you. Just wait until he meets Miss Carstairs, and he'll be instantly reconciled."

"No; I've talked it all over with Eileen, and she prefers to wait a while," replied Spencer. "I've explained that father is in ill health, and not himself—that's my excuse for not having her meet him. Of course, I've said nothing about Miss Burr or father's wishes, for Eileen's so proud that the mere idea of parental opposition would keep her from marrying me. We're young, and can lose nothing by waiting a while. Of course, I must eventually tell father—break it to him by degrees, for he's awfully set on Julie as a daughter-in-law. I know you won't say anything about this to a soul, Jack. As for your advice, I'll accept it in the spirit meant, and, of course, now that you know Eileen and I are engaged, come around to the studio as often as you wish. Better get acquainted with your prospective sister-in-law."

"Thanks," smiled Jack, shaking his head, "but I know when three's a crowd. You won't find me butting in any more."

Thus what had threatened to be a rupture between the half brothers ended with a mutually better understanding and a display of good feeling on both sides.

At this time Jack was not living at home, and he saw Spencer but occasionally. He now curtailed his visits to the other's studio, having no wish to interrupt the courtship. He had known from the first that Eileen loved Spencer, that her affection was apparently returned by the latter; but the question of Julie Burr had been troubling him. He didn't know if Spencer would renounce Miss Burr for the sake of Eileen.

Julie and Spencer were childhood intimates; she was very wealthy in her own right, an obvious favorite with Mr. Gra-

hame, and very fond of Spencer. Until the advent of Eileen, Spencer and Julie had been inseparable, and between the two families it had always been vaguely understood or assumed for granted that these two would ultimately marry. The beauty and charm of Eileen Carstairs had changed all this—though apparently not outwardly—and Jack had wondered if Spencer would stand the acid when it became a question of marriage; choose Eileen and her comparative poverty, or Miss Burr's wealth. He had reason to know that Spencer was essentially selfish; by him material blessings were not regarded lightly.

Apparently Julie knew nothing of Eileen, for her intimacy with Spencer remained unchanged, and it was this fact which prompted Jack to speech. He felt it was time Spencer knew his own mind; his present attitude was fair to neither girl. If his attentions to Miss Carstairs were not serious then they must cease at once. Thus, although Jack himself was in love with Eileen—though ignorant of the fact—his attitude had been impersonal, while to Spencer it smacked greatly of self-interest and jealousy. Jack had been thinking solely of Eileen and the honor of the family.

Naturally Jack did not know his half brother very well. In boyhood their paths had diverged—Spencer being placed at an expensive school—and advancing years had widened the distance. Of Spencer's Continental life Jack knew nothing, and he credited him with no more experience or worldly knowledge than his years appeared to warrant. This was a vital mistake, for in many ways Spencer was the elder; older in knowledge and experience it is better not to possess. He was far from being the innocent and ingenuous young man that he looked and his family thought him.

A few months after Jack had learned of Spencer's secret engagement there came a series of events that entirely disrupted and disintegrated the Grahames as a family. Death was the prime factor, and it came unexpectedly, for hard-

ly a week subsequent to Jack's gaining no small measure of fame with his first canvas, Mr. and Mrs. Grahame were instantly killed in a railroad accident.

Mr. Grahame left his entire estate, both real and personal, amounting to something over one hundred thousand dollars, to Spencer. Had Mr. Grahame been spared longer there is little doubt but that his stepson would not have been so unfairly discriminated against, for the possibilities of "Leap!" had opened the other's eyes, and the two were reaching a better understanding when death intervened.

Jack had always expected Spencer to be the sole legatee, and he was neither surprised nor wounded when the will was read. The estate was not left in trust, but given outright to the heir.

The lawyers had hardly finished winding up affairs, when one day Jack was startled by receiving a wire from Spencer, stating briefly that Eileen and he had been quietly married, and were sailing for Havre. From Paris he had subsequently received one or two letters from Spencer, and then there came silence. Jack wrote, but his letters remained unanswered, and finally his later ones were returned from the dead-letter office. That had been two years past, and he next heard of Spencer from Mrs. Blugsby.

The deception practiced upon Eileen had succeeded admirably thus far, but, while absurdly easy of accomplishment in the hospital, Jack, since coming out to Colchester, was daily finding his rôle more difficult. Not that Eileen even remotely suspected the fraud, but she was beginning to ask awkward questions, and Jack had never been a perfect master of

the untruth. Had Eileen not been blind, she would have instantly detected the outward and visible signs of a guilty conscience whenever her putative husband was cornered with a question, and was compelled to invent an impromptu plausible answer.

Jack's optimistic belief that Spencer would be located before Eileen was able to leave the hospital had gradually been dispelled as the days passed, and his efforts brought no result. He had even enlisted the services of a private detective agency, but absolutely no trace of Spencer had been found either in Boston or any other city. He had vanished magically and effectively. Thus the deception Jack had undertaken, expecting



"May I come in, please?"

it to be of short duration, was lengthening out with no end in sight.

Either Spencer was dead, or he was taking pains to conceal his identity—why, Jack could not fathom. In either case the latter confronted an exceedingly unpleasant duty which ultimately must be performed, for Eileen was either a deserted wife or widow. She would be kept in ignorance as long as it was humanly possible.

Doctor Murgatroyd, who paid a weekly visit to Colchester, admitted that in another month his patient would be able to learn the truth. He, like Jack, was hanging on in the hope that Spencer would turn up. Murgatroyd, despite his calling, was something of a sentimentalist—though he took pains to conceal the fact—and owned a horror of giving even necessary pain.

Jack had made inquiries in Sharon regarding Eileen's relatives, for if Spencer did not return her future must be provided for. He learned that the aunt with whom she had previously lived was dead. There were no other relatives except Eileen's brother, regarding whom no one apparently knew anything. It was said he had visited Sharon some time during the previous year, but where he had gone, whether he was living or dead, no one knew. Thus Eileen was virtually alone in the world.

CHAPTER V.

Following the knock there came a very small, meek voice requesting: "May I come in, please?" and Jack turned from the easel to confront Eileen Grahame. It was a constant source of wonder to him that those eyes could see nothing, for their owner, after becoming familiar with the house, found her way about without difficulty, though Mrs. James invariably accompanied her.

It was early spring, the studio windows were open, and the fresh, invigorating air from the distant bay gently fluttered about the bare room, investigating paper and canvas, while Eileen greedily sniffed at it, wrinkling a small nose, and flushing with pleasure.

"It always smells so good," she ex-

plained. "Are you surprised to see me?" she continued shyly. "And am I intruding? Mrs. James has gone to the village—in fact, I sent her just so's I could come up here. She's an awfully hard body to elude, and—and, Spencer, why do you and Mrs. James insist upon regarding me as an invalid? For I'm not, you know."

"No, I don't know," said Grahame indulgently. "You're still an invalid—and the stiller the better. I know it's hard sometimes to remember we aren't entirely strong when we feel as if we could accomplish anything—and I see that you feel that way this morning."

This lack of strength was a fiction which Murgatroyd, Grahame, and Mrs. James sought to foster in Eileen's mind, solely in order that Jack's rôle might be made the less difficult. He was supposed not to overtax her meager store of vitality—Murgatroyd had delivered these strict orders in Eileen's presence—and he had merely paid certain daily visits to the patient and her nurse, as if she were still in the hospital. This visit of Eileen's to the studio was an entirely new and disquieting departure, and it was practically the first time he had been alone with her.

"Yes, I feel as if I could do anything," said Eileen slowly, "and I *know* that I can. I'm just as well as I ever was. This talk about my being an invalid is all nonsense, Spencer. I've tried to be patient, and obey Doctor Murgatroyd's orders, but I'm getting awfully tired of them. And then there's Mrs. James. She's good, and kind, and all that, but one would think I was married to her. She isn't *you*. I can't get rid of her for a moment, and you are what I want."

"But you need some one," said Grahame gently. "You see, I'm kept very busy, Eileen, and, aside from the question of your health, you require some one as a companion and maid. It isn't as if you could do things for yourself—read, and sew, and amuse yourself—like the old days. I know time must hang very heavy, but this won't last always."

"Oh, I wasn't complaining," ex-

claimed Eileen hastily. "Please don't think I was, Spencer. I didn't mean it that way at all."

There was a quality in her voice that caused Grahame to wince. It suggested unpleasant possibilities as to Spencer's attitude toward her in the past.

"Complain?" he echoed. "Why, you haven't uttered a peevish word, Eileen; you, who have lost, perhaps, man's greatest blessing. After all you've suffered and come through, when you've just cause for resentment and condemnation—to put it very mildly—you merely ask me not to think you're complaining! Why, if I owned half your toleration, patience, fortitude, forgiveness, and loyalty——" He stopped suddenly, conscious that in the heat of his anger he had been arraigning Spencer.

At his words, Eileen had flushed vividly.

"Don't talk like that," she said gently. "What I've lost is nothing to what I've gained—for I've gained you, haven't I, dear? You aren't really tired of me, after all? Ah, I can hear it in your voice that you still love me! What is loss of eyesight compared with this? But—but are you sure it isn't merely sympathy?" she added slowly. "You see, I must be less desirable than ever. I must be a burden. I hate to think of you saddled with a blind wife," toying nervously with her wedding ring.

"Please don't say that," he replied. "Let us forget the past if we can, Eileen. Let us begin over again. Start me with a clean slate, and I'll try to make up for the past."

"I thought we'd agreed never, never to mention that past," she reproved, laughing happily. "However, I'm just going to say one more word concerning it, and that is that it seems like a bad dream; something that never truly happened. And now you may kiss me," she finished demurely, folding her hands and holding up her face, "for that's why I got rid of Mrs. James and came up here. Do you know you haven't kissed me since that day in the hospital?"

"And do you think I'm not aware of that?" he lightly returned. "Surely you

haven't thought it negligence or indifference. The truth is you must take the word for the deed, until Murgatroyd removes the embargo. I faithfully promised him to strictly confine myself to lip service."

"And that is what I want, my dear."

"Oh, but I don't mean what you mean," he laughed ruefully. "I'm restricted to words, not deeds."

"But just look at your deeds," she interrupted. "Look what you've done for me, and I wish to repay it if I can."

"You may be sure I'll exact full payment when Murgatroyd ceases to regard you as a patient," interrupted Grahame. "Come, don't tempt me," he pleaded, with mock concern. "You're to avoid all excitement."

"Just one," she pleaded. "I promise not to become excited. I don't see how one little kiss can produce such disastrous results, and I don't believe Doctor Murgatroyd really said a word about kissing. How do you expect me to grow strong and well when you won't let me be with you? When you won't even kiss me?"

"Before this month is out things will be entirely different," said Grahame confidently. "Now, just look at my side of it for a moment. I've come so near losing you that now I wouldn't disobey the doctor's orders for the world. Whether he's overcautious or not, I can do but one thing—obey him. It's a question of honor with me; if he hadn't known I was to be trusted he wouldn't have let you come here. You're of a nervous temperament, and naturally excitable."

"Something awfully funny must be the matter with me if I can't even be kissed," she sighed. "Are you sure the measles didn't disfigure me? Make me so repulsive it would be a hardship for any one to kiss me?"

"You know that's nonsense, Eileen," said Grahame gently. "If you could see yourself now, for instance—— Well, I think you're the most captivating and beautiful woman I ever——"

"Married," she finished demurely.

"Saw," he corrected, with sincerity. "And that suggests an idea. Why not

sit for me, eh? I mean a full-length portrait in oils. You wore a pale green dress and a bunch of Jacks the other day that contrasted admirably with your hair and skin. You're a rare type—as you very well know. You won't find many with your coloring having such dark eyes and brows."

"You can tell the nicest untruths," she laughed, flushing with pleasure, and receiving the suggestion with naïve delight. He had succeeded in diverting her mind from the main theme. "Surely you're not making love to me all over again."

"I never stopped, Eileen. This painting will be a really ambitious effort," he hastily continued. "It won't be for sale, mind you, though if it does you justice we'll exhibit it."

"If you only will!" she cried. "If you could get on the line, like Jack. I've always said you could. But the question is if I'll do you justice, not you me."

"If you care to be a professional model," said Grahame, quite truthfully. "I know many famous artists who'd gladly take all the time you could give. Don't let your eligibility trouble you. Murgatroyd said nothing about your sitting for me—that's one possibility he overlooked—but, anyway, we won't let him know. I won't overtax your strength, and it'll give me an excuse for being with you more often than I have. For, of course, you must realize this hospital régime hasn't been any too pleasant for me."

"And Mrs. James won't be present during these sittings," she pleaded.

"No, she won't be present," promised Grahame.

"Then you'll see how quickly I'll get well," said Eileen, sighing contentedly. "But, Spencer, are—are you sure you can afford the time? That is one question I must have out with you, for it's been troubling me greatly. My illness must have been terribly expensive, and then there's Mrs. James and Doctor Murgatroyd, to say nothing of flowers and carriage drives every day, and—and every luxury the most spoiled woman could possibly want."

"Well, I see we must discuss the past, after all," said Grahame cheerfully. "You mustn't bother your head about finances. I thought you understood my Boston trip had been more successful than even I anticipated. In fact, the commission netted me a small fortune, and I'm on the high road to affluence. I've broken into the high-class set, and that kind of work pays far better——"

He stopped, with a horrible feeling of having made a ghastly error. Eileen's expression predicted disaster.

"But, Spencer, I don't understand," she exclaimed, in a dazed manner, pushing back her heavy hair. "What do you mean by—by Boston and a commission?"

"W-why, that I want there," said Grahame desperately. "Had a commission to paint a portrait of Wilding, the big millionaire dry-goods man, you know. He liked it so well I had to do his wife and family."

"Spencer, you're joking with me!" she cried sharply. "Don't tell me I imagined all that happened that dreadful night at Mrs. Blugsby's! Don't tell me it was all a part of my sickness! Or, rather, do, do," she pleaded hysterically. "If it's the truth."

"Hush! I didn't mean to excite you, Eileen."

"But I must know!" she cried, jumping to her feet. "Don't you see you're torturing me? You must tell me the truth. Have I been out of my mind? Did I dream that awful night?"

She stepped impulsively toward him, guided by his voice; then staggered back, and uttered a sharp little cry as the brilliant sun, striking upon an enlarging glass hanging on the wall, was reflected with concentrated strength full into her eyes. She had walked directly into its radius.

Grahame stood spellbound for a moment before he could summon will power to speak and act.

"What is it, dear?" he finally asked, in a voice he vainly strove to render steady as he gently withdrew Eileen's hands from her eyes.

"My head," she murmured vaguely, suffering her hands to remain passively in his. "I had the strangest sensation. A blinding light seemed to scorch my brain. W-what was it, Spencer? My eyes are on fire, and I feel so dizzy."

"You must lie down for a moment," he said, leading her to the divan. "You know I told you Murgatroyd said he didn't think your loss of eyesight would be permanent, and we've only been waiting until you could stand an examination and possible operation by a specialist. Well, Murgatroyd hasn't been a false prophet. You stepped directly into the reflected glare of the sun, and the result conclusively shows the nerves of your eyes aren't dead; in fact, they must be very much alive. I haven't encouraged you much in the belief of your being able to see again, because we weren't at all certain, and didn't wish to raise any false hopes, but this incident has convinced me that Murgatroyd's belief was well founded. Think of what this means, Eileen! It means you can see the birds, the trees, and flowers; the sun, sea, and sky."

"And best of all—you," she whispered, pressing his hand. "That comes first. Think of my being able to see you!"

"Yes, me," said Grahame blankly.

Somehow he had overlooked that entirely logical fact. He sat very still, while Eileen continued, in a tired, musing, but happy voice:

"To think of seeing you again! God is good! Of course, I've missed my world of light, but there's a law of compensation, they say, and the loss of one faculty increases the power of the others. My hearing and sense of touch have developed wonderfully in this short time, and my intuition—well, it's becoming strange and wonderful. Don't laugh, but sometimes I've the queerest feeling about you, dear. I feel as if you were not Spencer. Of course, it's absurd; one with my affliction would at least know one's husband."

"But do you really know me?" asked Grahame, with forced lightness. "Two years is a short time in which to thoroughly know any one. And then our

separation was over six months; one can be reborn in less than that time."

"Yes, it must be that, or my illness," she slowly agreed. "You have changed greatly, and—and—well, it's an awfully nice change, Spencer. You don't mind my saying so? I feel as if you were—I can't definitely express it—but there's so much in you I never knew existed. At least, I believed it to be there, but somehow I never succeeded in finding it. Perhaps, though, I have changed, and not you. Perhaps I have now the ability to understand—to find."

"Your saying that occasionally you didn't think I was Spencer suggests quite a novel idea; one that might do for a story," said Grahame steadily. "Supposing such a thing were possible—we'll admit it for argument's sake—and a woman in your position was successfully deluded into believing some one else to be her husband—"

"A stranger?" laughed Eileen.

"Well—no. Say some one she knew but casually, though he had learned to love her."

"Then why didn't he marry her? Your story must be logical."

"But suppose she didn't love him? Wouldn't that be logical enough?"

"It depends on the character of this man," said Eileen judiciously. "Is he supposed to be the hero?"

"Oh, no. There's nothing heroic about him. He's merely a middling, average sort of person, with good and bad impulses, like the rest of us."

"But why should he delude the poor wife? Is he the villain?"

"Perhaps he might turn out one," said Grahame slowly. "If the temptation's strong enough there's no knowing what may happen. I don't know the end of the story. But suppose—well, suppose the husband were dead, or something of that sort; suppose our heroine's blindness could be cured—as we believe yours can; suppose the pseudo husband—we'll call him the substitute—loved her so much that, knowing if her eyesight were restored it would mean her discovering the fraud, his losing her—You see the temptation?"

"It certainly opens up wonderful



"She's the same party, all right, for I saw her yesterday on the veranda."

possibilities," said Eileen, clapping her hands, and laughing softly.

"And then," pursued Grahame, "if this woman had the choice, would it not be better to remain forever blind than recover her eyesight, and learn the then necessary truth? Of course, she's supposed to be very much in love with her husband," he added lightly; "otherwise there would be no necessity for the deception in the first instance. There's a problem I'd like to place before women just to see what decision they'd make."

"I think nine out of ten would prefer to remain happy in the delusion, but perhaps I'm wrong," said Eileen slowly. "Of course, the permanency of that delusion must be granted as a matter of course. The tenth woman would do the opposite; not because she preferred eyesight, but—well, she might think of the hereafter, and if we're all-wise beyond the grave, she would then know the deception."

"But then it wouldn't matter," supplemented Grahame. "And would you be the tenth woman?"

"Don't!" she pleaded, hiding her face on his arm. "I hate these ugly hypothetical questions, that have no foundation in fact; they distress one needlessly. But if I *had* to choose, I'd elect eyesight. I'd rather have the courage to face my loss; to strive to bear it; to learn renunciation.

At least, I think I would, even at so great a price. And if I couldn't survive—well, wouldn't one better be dead than living in a fool's paradise?"

"Though, remember, one wouldn't *know* it was merely a fool's paradise," said Grahame, the lines deepening on his face. "But I think that's the only choice, Eileen. It's what a man would choose—the hardest, bitterest way. I mean a real man."

"And then there's the poor husband's side of it," pursued Eileen. "For instance, would you like to know, even

beyond the grave, that another was posing successfully as my husband?"

"If for your happiness, yes," said Grahame quietly.

"Oh, then you're much more liberal and broad-minded than I," she sighed. "I'd turn over in my grave if you married again. I know I should." She smiled, and stretched her arms, adding: "This little story of yours has been very diverting, and I'd forgotten how my eyes ache. I became so interested in that fictional couple, just as if they were facing a concrete problem. You see, the vitally weak point in the whole thing is the success of the impersonation; the wife not recognizing the substitute as a fraud. Granting that, you can grant anything, and build up an amazing series of complications. I think if she failed to instantly detect the deception—no matter how similar the voices of the two men—it would show she never really loved her husband; didn't love him for what he was, but what she believed him to be; knew him only externally."

"But aren't we all apt to do that?" he asked. "Love the shadow, not the substance; deify, idealize, idolize. It's only when our idols prove to be of the rankest clay, fall from the pedestals of their own volition, that we awaken, and still love them for their faults."

"But you could make the story have a happier ending," she laughed, "and who wants to pay for the privilege of reading about sorrow and misery when there's plenty to go round in everyday life? Why not have the substitute the hero, after all? Make the husband the villain, and have the substitute marry the heroine."

"That only happens in stories," said Grahame. "Life has few happy endings."

"Nonsense! Look at ours," she whispered. And, before he could realize her intent, she had put her arms about him, and drawn his lips to hers. "There!" she laughed, with flushed cheeks and quivering lips. "I told you I'd have just one. And I'm not a bit excited."

CHAPTER VI.

"A lady to see you, sir," said the maid.

Visitors were virtually an unknown quantity, especially ladies, in Colchester, and Grahame turned from his easel with a strange sense of foreboding. Only the previous day a registered letter had arrived, and when he opened the envelope it contained nothing. He was unfamiliar with the writing, and could not help feeling the letter was a decoy; perhaps a clever way of securing his address.

"Did she mention her name?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, sir," said the maid. "Miss Burr, of New York. She said you would understand, and if you were out she would wait until you came back."

Grahame nodded, and threw off his long apron, after soaking his discarded brushes in turpentine. He asked himself with senseless reiteration what had occasioned Julie Burr's visit. How had she discovered his sanctuary? Since Spencer's marriage he had not seen her; he had drifted out of the old set, and, since his coming to Colchester, had even forsaken the new friends and acquaintances in literary, musical, and artistic circles which his success had gained for him. He did not at all relish the idea of having been ferreted out; a flood of visitors would bring the possible complications he had been at such pains to avoid. Yet Julie was an old and intimate friend, and he could do nothing but receive her. He felt, too, that he rather owed her extra consideration, for Spencer had treated her rather shabbily.

Miss Burr looked considerably older and more careworn than when Grahame had last seen her.

"Well, I must say this is a nice way to treat your old friends," she greeted, offering a frank hand. "Is this what success has done for you? Aren't any of the old crowd good enough for you now?"

"Much too good, as always—especially those who are generous enough to overlook my shortcomings, and honor me with a visit," he laughed, returning

the banter. But underneath her gay exterior he sensed that Julie was as secretly ill at ease as was he himself. "And how did you find your way to Colchester, of all places?" he continued. "Colchester at this time of the year isn't Aiken or Asheville."

"No, nor is New York—and we haven't been South all winter. Business kept father in town, and we didn't feel like going. We've been wondering what had happened to you. Up to a month or so ago we had an occasional word of you—mutual acquaintances had met you here and there—but then the earth seemed to yawn and swallow you up, and, behold, I find you here. I scented a mystery, Jack."

"Nothing but the mystery of art," he laughed. "This isn't the first winter I've put in at Colchester, for I never could take the hurdles with the smart set. I was tired of the city, and the doctor recommended pure air and rest—so there you are."

"Is that all? I thought perhaps it might have been the inevitable woman." She sighed, looking restlessly about her. "And, my! This establishment is quite regal for Colchester. It looks as if you'd gone to housekeeping. By the way, have you heard from Spencer lately?"

This was said with admirable unconcern, but Grahame felt that at last she had mentioned the object of her visit.

"Not for a long time," he said guardedly. "Something must have happened to his right hand, for he hasn't answered my letters of late. In fact, it's about two years since I've heard from him."

"What? Two years?" she echoed, palpably startled and amazed. "Why, I don't understand! That's extraordinary!"

"Perhaps, but you know how work interferes with a man's affections," laughed Grahame. "I'm sure Spencer always intended writing, but has kept putting it off from day to day—just the way I do. When I get the time I'll run over to Paris and look him up."

"But he isn't there!" said Julie sharply. "Surely you know that. He re-

turned almost a year ago—last May, to be exact."

"And how do you know?"

"Know? Why, I've seen him frequently."

"Then you've been more fortunate than I, Julie. A month or so ago I did hear in a roundabout fashion that he had returned, and was in town, but that's all."

"Rather strange," she said dryly, eying him intently. "I thought you two had more brotherly affection than that."

"I see you think we've had a quarrel, but really we haven't," said Grahame. "I can't explain why we've drifted apart; I only know the effect, not the cause. I've made every effort to locate Spencer, but can find no trace of him."

"I should think you'd be worried to death," she said sharply. "If I had a brother, and didn't hear from him, I'd certainly become alarmed; think he was ill, and take steps to find out. Surely that's the least one could do. I must say this indifference is unlike you, Jack. Rather unnatural, too, don't you think?"

"If you can suggest what other steps I can take I'll be obliged," said Grahame, a trifle irritably, noting her high color and angry eyes. "Boston was the city in which Spencer was supposed to be. Well, I've been there in person; the hospitals have been searched, the police have been questioned, and I've even advertised in the press. I've hired the best private detectives, but up to the present every effort has been futile."

"As bad as that?" cried Miss Burr, with blanched cheek. "I—I knew something terrible must have happened!"

"Nothing terrible has happened," interrupted Grahame. "Be sensible, Julie. A man can't involuntarily disappear, and leave no trace. It's practically impossible. I'm not worried about Spencer, because I know he must be alive and well. He has some good reason for not showing up. He's a victim of wanderlust, and perhaps has sailed for France or Italy."

"Don't be absurd!" she cried. "Couldn't they trace him? If he were alive wouldn't he know the worry he was causing? Wouldn't he see the ad-

vertisements? And why should he choose to disappear? Jack," she added tremulously, "I hunted you out solely for the purpose of asking about Spencer. I think you know that. I had difficulty in locating you, but finally traced you through the post office—you may remember receiving a registered letter which proved to be empty. I put off consulting any one else, for I thought you might possibly know something. Tell me the truth, Jack. You aren't hiding anything from me?"

"Regarding Spencer's whereabouts? Why should I? I'm more concerned about his absence than you can possibly be. You seem to forget that I'm his brother."

"And you that I'm his fiancée!" she cried, arising and facing him.

He stared at her a long moment.

"Fiancée?" he echoed at length. "What nonsense is this, Julie? Has Spencer been divorced?"

It was her turn to stare.

"Divorced? And from whom? What do you mean? Are you mad, Jack, or am I?"

"It must be you," he said doggedly. "Why are you pretending you don't know Spencer's been married for over two years?"

Miss Burr uttered a sharp little cry, and, after blindly groping for the chair, abruptly sat down. Then she laughed.

"This is a silly joke of yours," she said, attempting a smile. But the expression in his eyes galvanized her anew to action, and she sprang to her feet, crying: "Say it's not true! Say it isn't! I won't believe it for a moment! It's an outrageous falsehood! It's cruel and wicked of you to say such a thing even in fun!"

"I wish it were fun!" said Grahame, through his teeth. "Look here, Julie, we might as well thrash this thing out here and now, and try to reach some sort of an understanding. It's no use shirking the truth; it must be faced squarely some time, and it's better to have it over and done with. I know for a fact that Spencer's married. I've met his wife, and knew her before he be-

came engaged to her. That's the brutal truth."

Now that she knew the worst, Miss Burr met this crisis in her life with fitting fortitude and coolness.

"When did this marriage take place?" she asked quietly, biting the quiver from her lips.

"About two years ago—when Spencer sailed for Havre. It was quite informal, I believe, though I really know little about it, for the first I knew concerning it was when Spencer sent me a wire, saying he was married and was off to France. I tried to catch the boat, but it had sailed that morning. Naturally I thought you knew. Didn't he write you?"

"Yes, frequently," she said colorlessly; "but he mentioned nothing concerning his—his marriage. He said the death of his parents had so upset him he'd suddenly made up his mind to go abroad for a time. He intended studying in Paris."

"Would you mind telling me what your relations were with him at the time? I mean, you weren't engaged?"

"No. That is, not officially. I had really no claim on his goings and comings. He was a free agent. But—well, there was a vague understanding between us; it had existed from our childhood days."

"I know," said Grahame quietly. He looked aged and careworn. "Then you never knew Spencer was engaged? He made no effort to do away with the old understanding between you? He didn't tell you he was no longer a free agent? He didn't come out, and say he was in love with another, and would eventually marry her?"

Julie slowly shook her head, without replying.

"May I ask when your engagement became official?" pursued Grahame.

"Official is hardly the word, Jack," she replied. "Spencer wished me to keep it s-secret for a time. He said it was owing to some legal matter—just what he wouldn't explain—but it would be eventually removed, and then he would tell me. Father and mother knew nothing about our engagement, though,

of course, they recognized some understanding. That's why I came to see you, for no one knew my affairs but myself. I didn't mean to tell you, but I—I wanted to show my right for being so concerned."

"And when did this secret engagement take place, Julie?"

"Last summer—June twentieth. The night before we left for Cape May."

Grahame realized this was some little time prior to the putative Boston commission. It was now early March.

"When did Spencer return from abroad?" he pursued.

"In May—so he said. During his year's residence on the Continent he wrote me frequently. Naturally, I was offended at his remaining so long, but when we—we met, of course, I forgave him. The loss of his parents was a great shock, and I took that into account. He required time to get over his first grief."

"Did he visit you at Cape May?"

"Oh, yes. He came in July, and remained until the middle of August."

This was when Eileen was going through her hell at Mrs. Blugsby's boarding house; and Grahame's eyes, from smoldering, leaped into flame.

"He didn't act as if there was anything on his mind?" he asked ironically. "Even the smallest prick of conscience?"

Julie shook her head.

"He seemed entirely happy," she said wearily.

"Where did he go after leaving Cape May?"

"To New York—at least, so I believe, for he wrote me from there. He came down for every week-end with us until the close of the season. We returned to town in September. I saw him last on New Year's Day."

"What?" exclaimed Grahame. "Only two months ago? Had he been visiting you up to that time?"

"Yes; once a week or so. I understood he was living at the Bachelors' Club. I wrote him there, and he received the letters, I know."

"He could call for his mail," said Grahame. This meant that while the hospital authorities were searching Boston,

Spencer was quietly living in New York. "Has Spencer's personal appearance changed since two years ago?" asked Grahame suddenly.

"Well, he now wears a mustache and beard—or did when I last saw him. When I met him in May on his return from abroad, he was clean shaven—his usual way, you know—but after coming to Cape May he permitted his mustache and beard to grow."

"Have you heard from him at all since New Year's?"

"Yes; up to the first of February. He was then in the South—New Orleans and the Point—and I wrote him care of general delivery at the former place, for he explained he would have no fixed address. He was on a sketching trip, so I understood. Since February I've heard nothing, and my last letters have been returned."

"Why didn't you come to me before this, Julie?"

"Well, there were so many reasons. You couldn't be found anywhere, and then Spencer said not to be alarmed if he delayed in answering my letters. He said they might be a long time in reaching him, for he left the beaten track in such sketching trips. Then no one was to know of my engagement—you, above all."

"And why was I specially selected? I can guess, but what reason were you given?"

"Spencer said you and he had quarreled. That you would try to break our engagement if you knew of it."

"He's right there," said Grahame grimly. "I certainly would, when aware he was married."

"Of course, that wasn't the explanation he gave," said Julie. "S-somehow, at the time it seemed adequate—I never doubted Spencer's word—but now it's so—so ridiculous."

Grahame said nothing, and after a moment Miss Burr added:

"Spencer gave me to understand you were jealous of him; that you had quarreled violently over me." She laughed shortly. "That shows what one's vanity can do for one," she added bitterly. "I actually believed you had dropped

out of our set because you couldn't bear Spencer's success—you, who have never been anything but a good friend."

"This side of Spencer's character has been a revelation to me," said Grahame slowly. "I knew he was weak and selfish, but we all have our faults, and I thought him no worse than the rest of us. I feel very much to blame for not knowing him better, for I could have saved you much suffering, Julie. I knew of Spencer's engagement, but kept it secret because he said father was against it. Of course, I took it for granted he would tell you, or at least give you to clearly understand he was pledged elsewhere. I can't comprehend his actions, or understand how a man could be so base and utterly devoid of principle. What does he hope to gain by it? Does he intend securing a divorce? That's the only explanation I can see. I can offer no proof, Julie, of what I've told you, but I ask you to believe it for your own sake."

"I do believe it. I can't help but believe it," she said brokenly. "There are a thousand and one little things I now see in a different light. It—it may seem unnatural to condemn unheard the man to whom you're engaged, but reason will not listen to my heart. You wouldn't lie to me, Jack. I know that."

She broke down at last, sobbing hysterically, and Grahame suffered her, saying no word.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Adolphus Hock—he of the hall room in Mrs. Blugsby's boarding house—was a week behind in his rent. Since the State had closed the pool rooms, and the track had ceased to be a source of revenue, Mr. Hock's finances had suffered what he termed a bad crimp. The open season for "Suckers" and "Marks"

had also been a failure, owing to the unfeeling activity of the new police commissioner, and there had been few pickings worth mentioning.

Mr. Hock's "line" made his living in a respectable neighborhood a decided advantage, and he had discovered at quite an early period in his career that it was a testimonial to his upright moral character. To Mrs. Blugsby and her tenants he was known as an amiable gentleman who was supposed to have some mysterious connection with Wall Street, which enabled

him to keep irregular hours and pay his rent on the nail. Presumably he was a promoter or broker—vague, indefinite, affluent terms that may mean anything.

Mr. Hock, if requested, would have experienced some difficulty in defining his calling or profession, but privately he frankly admitted that he drew the line at murder and suicide; outside these he would attempt anything, providing the need and gain were great, and the risk small. There was no humoring him



"You beast!" he said, livid with rage. "You did drive me to it, after all, eh?"

out of this last stipulation, for to avoid all unnecessary risk and keep out of jail was his cardinal rule. A finished gambler, he knew the law of percentages, and no insurance company could teach him anything regarding risks. Whatever the game, he "played it safe."

This native caution, combined with lack of necessity, had thus far in Mr. Hock's career kept his photograph from adorning the Rogues' Gallery, but he was known to the central office as an earnest student of various "con" games; one who owned a wide circle of shady acquaintances, and if not actually embarked on a career of crime, possessed a tendency in that direction. This was a flattering conception of his character, an underestimation of his natural ability, for Adolphus had successfully embarked on a career of crime at the tender age of eight. Caution and cleverness, not scruple, had kept him out of jail.

In itself a week's overdue rent did not occasion Adolphus great trepidation or moral self-revulsion. His conscience did not torture him; he was not hypersensitive. In fact, a bull elephant could safely be considered more spiritually shrinking than he. Yet, to give him his due, he would prefer "beating" any one other than Mrs. Blugsby. If it could be avoided, he would not rob a person who needed the money, or could ill afford the loss. Besides, it would be an inconvenience to move, and wherever he went he must pay in advance. In short, "beating" Mrs. Blugsby would not remove the crimp in his finances, and thus he nobly resolved to pay his landlady. All of which goes to explain why Mr. Hock, carefully dressed, as was his wont, looked up a time-table one fine morning, and boarded a train for Colchester.

The "game" Mr. Hock had on tap was one the rudiments of which had been lying in his mind for some time. He never neglected anything, however seemingly trivial, which might prove of future use, and the feasibility of this game he had instantly appreciated from the first. Necessity brought it to the front. The game of Adolphus was sim-

ple in the extreme, and, to jurisprudence, is technically known as blackmail. Jack Grahame, it was conceded, would be the one to kindly remove the crimp from the Hock finances.

Adolphus had carefully prepared his campaign. Mrs. Blugsby, to whom on many an occasion he had proven a sympathetic audience, had recounted the sequel to Mrs. Grahame's tragic little story, known to every tenant in the house. She had told about Grahame's visit, his leaving the check, his harsh words to her.

And the sympathetic Adolphus, with his peculiar mental twist and moral bias, had immediately speculated in private what possible dividends, if any, this gratuitous information contained. He read the papers, and had heard of Jack Grahame. Grahame was becoming prominent. The press contained no account of Mrs. Spencer Grahame's desertion. Was it being kept secret? Was this a family skeleton that one might pay to keep concealed from the public? In short, was there any money in it? Thus worked the mind of Adolphus, and he promptly set to work.

Patient and astute investigation eventually led him to Colchester, and there he had no difficulty in learning that Mr. and Mrs. Grahame resided there. He proved quite to his own satisfaction that this Mr. Grahame was the coming artist, and not the one he had casually known at Mrs. Blugsby's. He proved that Eileen was the Mrs. Spencer Grahame he had also casually known.

The rest was simple, for Mr. Hock's deductions were nothing if not primitive. Jack Grahame was posing as the husband of his sister-in-law, and therefore big dividends were due the astute Adolphus. The latter knew Eileen was blind, but the idea of Grahame's deception being conceived and executed solely in a high-minded spirit never occurred to Mr. Hock, or, if it had, would have been promptly dismissed. Adolphus was no idealist, and rather prided himself on knowing a thing or two; his experience of life, and, above all, of himself had not given him a lofty conception of his neighbor.

Mr. Hock's visit occurred two days subsequent to that of Miss Burr, and during this interval Grahame had not been idle. Such information regarding Spencer as Julie had been able to give him he had turned over to the private detective agency. It was clearly apparent to him that in permitting beard and mustache to grow, Spencer had been indulging in no vain whim, but had taken pains to materially alter his appearance, and there could be no doubt he was also living under an assumed name.

Spencer's elaborate precautions for concealing his identity puzzled Grahame exceedingly. Why should he conduct himself like a criminal hiding from the law when Eileen—presumably the only person whom he wished to evade—had made little, if any, attempt to locate him? The explanation that he was taking steps to secure a divorce was entirely inadequate, for he had not established residence in any one State for the period prescribed by law. Nor would this explanation account for his strange behavior.

Undoubtedly Eileen could throw some light on the matter, but Grahame was careful to avoid all mention of the past. What precisely had she meant by that "awful night at Mrs. Blugsby's"? In what manner had he, Grahame, blundered by mentioning the Boston commission?

That morning in the studio, when the reflected glare of the sun had struck at Eileen's defenseless, unseeing eyes, the resultant shock had come at a very opportune time for Grahame. It had checked Eileen's demands as to the truth of the Boston commission, turned her thoughts in another direction, though whether she had subsequently forgotten the matter, or was advisedly keeping silence and biding her time, Grahame did not know. It was apparent to him, however, that her suffering and illness had impaired her memory, or, at least, raised a serious doubt in her mind as to the reality of certain events and incidents antecedent to her isolation in the hospital. It had evidently occurred to her that the "awful night at Mrs. Blugsby's" might be merely a figment of the

imagination; a phantasmagoria born of her long delirium. This doubt, however, was not present—or, at least, did not attain coherency—until Grahame spoke so emphatically of the Boston commission.

Naturally it was but a question of time until Eileen reopened the matter, and pursued it to a logical conclusion. This Grahame realized, and, since the morning in the studio, had been careful to avoid all intimacies. The unexpected shock to the presumably dead optic nerves had occasioned a semirelapse in Eileen's convalescence; a temporary check to her triumphal march toward normal health. She now wore a bandage over her eyes, and even with this protection could not bear the full light of day. Murgatroyd, in her behalf, had sought a consultation with a prominent New York eye specialist.

Thus the visit of Adolphus Hock placed another time limit on the fraud conceived by Grahame and the sentimental house physician. Mr. Hock, however, refused to be put off. Unlike the eye specialist, he desired to operate at once, for the time limit offered by him was a matter of hours, not days, and it virtually assumed the form of an ultimatum.

"Mr. John Grahame, I believe?" he said suavely, when at length the other entered the drawing-room. "Well, my name is Hock—Adolphus Hock, of New York."

Grahame, offering no comment, appraised his visitor at a glance, and made a tentative note to the effect that Mr. Hock's eyes were set rather close together, that his hair was red, that his toes turned in. There was also a slight squint in the starboard optic. Outside these minor charms, he was smartly dressed, prosperous-looking, brisk, and businesslike, owning presumably a fund of native humor and optimism. The rather unusual surname of Hock somewhat troubled Grahame. He wondered where he had heard it, under what particular circumstances. That those circumstances had been unpleasant he felt, for the name produced a disagreeable sensation.



Instinctively he covered his face with his hands.

"And what can I do for you, Mr. Hock?" he said pleasantly. "What is the nature of your business?"

"Why, it ain't business, rightly speaking," said Adolphus, displaying a gold tooth as he smiled amiably. "It's sort of a social visit or neighborly call, you might say. Being down here, looking over some property I bought the other day, I just thought I'd drop in. Never expected to see you here. Never in the world. I came to see Spencer, and find out how his wife was doing. Funny thing," he reminiscently pursued, as Grahame remained silent, "but the folks here call her Mrs. Jack Grahame—some mistake, ain't there? For I knew her as Mrs. Spencer Grahame. She's the same party, all right, for I saw her yesterday on the veranda, and afterward

out driving in a carriage. Is she in, and can I see her?"

"You may not," said Grahame promptly. "Mrs. Grahame is not at home."

"Ain't that too bad!" murmured Adolphus, shaking his head. "Well, ain't her husband, Spencer, anywhere around? He'd be glad to see me, for Spence and I used to be pals in the old days."

Grahame hesitated, wondering how much his visitor knew. He didn't fancy his appearance or manner, but then he might be entirely ingenuous, and, if an old friend of Spencer, could perhaps give him a clew as to the other's whereabouts. At all events, it would be bad policy to take offense too easily for, perhaps, none was intended. He might awaken a suspicion that never existed but in his own mind.

"Naturally I don't know all my brother's friends and acquaintances," he said easily. "Has Spencer been keeping in touch with you, Mr. Hock?"

Adolphus read anxiety in the tone, for to his mind Jack Grahame, in choosing such a place as Colchester, could have no other purpose in view than keeping all knowledge of his deception from Spencer. Therefore now, much to Grahame's astonishment, he slowly closed one eye, and said, in a confidential whisper:

"Well, I ain't a go-between exactly, Mr. Grahame, but that don't say I don't know where Spence is keeping himself."

"Go-between for whom?" sharply demanded Grahame.

"Why, between you and Spence," said Mr. Hock amiably. "And I ain't saying," he added, shaking his head and looking solemn, "but what Spence would give something to know where his wife is. What loving husband wouldn't?"

Grahame eyed his visitor long and steadily; then he opened the door.

"Mr. Hock," he said quietly enough, "this interview is at an end. You've come to the wrong house. Don't make a second mistake of the kind."

Adolphus leisurely arose, but ignored the invitation to leave.

"I don't make many mistakes, Mr. Grahame, for they don't pay," he said coolly. "I'm pretty sure of what my hand and the other fellow's is worth before I call—and I never fall for no bluff."

Grahame closed the door.

"Just what do you mean?" he asked, clearing his throat, and turning to the other. "What's your game? If you're trying to sell any fake information concerning my brother, it won't go. I don't believe you ever were a friend of his, or that you know anything about him."

"Every one's entitled to his opinion," observed Adolphus, with the manner of a philosopher. "But here's what I *do* know," he added, tapping a palm with a thick forefinger. "I know Spence Grahame and Eileen, his wife, as well as I know my own face. I know Spence disappeared six months ago in Noo York. I know you're his brother; that to your Noo York friends you ain't supposed to be married—and that you *ain't* married. I know your voice is so like Spence's that it would deceive me if my eyes was shut. I know Eileen got sick, went to a hospital, and become blind. I know she's now living in this house, in this God-forsaken, out-of-the-way burg, and that she's known as your wife. Of course, you can deny all this, but I can easily prove it."

"How?" gently interrupted Grahame.

"I'll leave that to you," said Adolphus nonchalantly, inserting a toothpick in a corner of his mouth. "But I know a hundred people who can identify Eileen."

"I don't wish you to use that name," said Grahame, very slowly. "You've by no means convinced me, Mr. Hock, that friendship entitles you to employ it."

The student of risks shifted a little under Grahame's eyes.

"I ain't wishing to be unfriendly," he said.

"I hope not," said Grahame, still star-

ing. "I've no intention of denying all you've said, Mr. Hock," he added. "Your information is quite authentic. You merely know what is already known by others. And now, good morning."

"And don't I get nothing?" Adolphus blurted out, his diplomacy shattered by this peremptory dismissal.

"Get anything? Get what?" asked Grahame politely.

"For what I know!" snapped the other. "That bluff about others being wise don't get past me! You must take me for a sucker," he snarled, in his best bullying manner. "Do you think I come down here fer my health, eh?"

"No, but I think you'd better leave—for your health," said Grahame, swallowing hard. "I'm not very partial to blackmailers, Mr. Hock."

"I wouldn't use that word if I was you," said Adolphus. "There's such a thing as defamation of character. Have I been asking you for money? Then what are you beefing about, eh? I didn't ask for money, and I won't; but, as an old friend of Spence, who's temporarily embarrassed financially, I should think you'd be glad to lend me about five hundred without all this holler. That's just a suggestion."

"And one I won't act upon—you may be quite sure of that," said Grahame.

"Well, if you prefer to be air-tight, why, all right," sneered Adolphus. "I suppose if everybody knows you're living with Eileen Grahame it won't make much of a scandal in the neighborhood or the Noo York papers."

"No, it won't," agreed Grahame. "You see, the average citizen is a pretty decent sort, Mr. Hock. Foul minds are by no means general. You see, my reason for posing as Mrs. Grahame's husband— Oh, well, you wouldn't understand, Mr. Hock. It's quite beyond you."

"I don't know about that," said Adolphus, with a knowing smile. "I guess you didn't pick Colchester because of its natural beauties. It ain't the first time I've known a woman to shake her husband, preferring his brother—"

Grahame had him by the throat.

"You beast!" he said, livid with rage. "You did drive me to it, after all, eh?"

"Le' go!" gurgled Adolphus, purpling. "L-le' go!"

Grahame dropped his hands, and stepped back, mastering himself with an effort, while Adolphus cowered in a corner, pulling at a mutilated collar, and looking his malevolence and fear.

"I'll have the law on you for this!" he wheezed. "Assault and battery and defamation of character. A fine gentleman you are!"

"I'm sorry this had to happen in my own house," said Grahame, now entirely self-possessed. "I tried to be patient with you. Now let us understand each other, Mr. Hock, once and for all. I don't recognize your right to intrude in my private affairs. I will *not* submit to blackmail, even in its mildest form. I will not pay a cent for your silence. If you choose to speak, well and good; that is your privilege. But any scandal you give to the neighborhood or the press you'll pay for, and to me in person! I won't go to law, but you'll go to the hospital. That's the price you'll pay for not minding your own business!"

"Is that a threat?" demanded Adolphus, with fictitious courage.

"More than that—it's a sacred promise," said Grahame, "and one it'll pay you to remember. Now, get out, before you're thrown out!"

Adolphus got out. Somehow, he had miscalculated the risk attendant upon his little game. He had understood that artists in general were emotional, sensitive, rather effeminate creatures, unversed in the stern realities of life, who, on general principles, hated anything remotely approaching a "scene." But in Grahame he had found a "big bruiser," who looked and acted as if he could color eyes and alter features more skillfully with his knuckles than with brush or pencil. Personal violence appealed to Mr. Hock, and Grahame's personality had made a distinct impression on him. Grahame, contrary to all expectations, was clearly a "dangerous risk." Nevertheless, Mr. Hock hated him cordially, and where personal animus is involved

even the most cowardly among us are apt to reach undreamed-of heights of daring.

The visit of Adolphus had not proven altogether unprofitable, for, mindful to what unpleasant straits necessity may reduce one, he had studied Colchester with an eye to the possible future. Housebreaking was somewhat out of his "line," but if eventually it must be resorted to, such a town as Colchester certainly would be a more fitting place in which to make his debut than New York, for Adolphus owned a modest opinion of his talents.

Colchester wasn't overburdened with police protection, and such a "crib" as the Grahames' house would be worth the cracking—in fact, it was the logical place in the entire town—for it contained many articles of virtue, several of which Adolphus had thoughtfully secreted about his person while the maid was announcing his arrival.

It would be a rare pleasure to rob Grahame; secure the equivalent of the money he considered rightfully his as the price of his silence. And if he should happen to be caught, why, Grahame daren't prosecute him, for the great white light of the press would unearth facts that could not possibly be construed as blackmail. Surely no potential housebreaker essaying his first job could desire more safe conditions. Risk of prosecution was reduced to a minimum.

All this occurred to Adolphus as he returned to New York. He hadn't definitely committed himself to the plan, even in his own mind, but if something didn't turn up very soon that would better his finances he realized that he would be compelled to go out of his regular "line." And he didn't like Grahame, and in some manner he must coin his knowledge of the other's secret.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following evening, when Murgatroyd called, Grahame told him of Mr. Hock's visit.

"That's not very nice," said the house physician, with a troubled expression.

"A man like that may do anything. I wonder how he got hold of the information."

"That puzzled me at the time," replied Grahame. "The name was familiar, and yet I couldn't place him. But I kept at it, and this morning it came to me. I remember Mrs. Blugsby mentioning she had a roomer by the name of Hock. You can readily see the connection. I'm sure he's the man."

"I know it's hard to keep your hands off such vermin," said Murgatroyd, "but it might have been better to temporize with this fellow—or pretend to. There's Mrs. Grahame to consider. If the story got in the New York papers—"

"I don't think Mr. Hock will take that step, doctor. My decision wasn't a snapshot. I've been up against the blackmailing game before this, and have found that physical violence has more weight with its votaries than anything else. Hock at heart is a coward, and he'll think twice before incurring the risk of a broken head. Anyway, Murgatroyd, our game's up. We can't wait any longer. We took a chance, and lost out, and now we've got to pay the price. I must tell Eileen the truth. Now! At once!"

"Why?" demanded the other. "When we've waited so long, an extra week or so won't hurt. Further delay won't impair Mrs. Grahame's chances of regaining her eyesight. You may rest assured of that. What's the matter? You haven't heard unfavorable news of Spencer?"

"No more unfavorable than you know," said Grahame moodily, reaching for his pipe. "The futility of the whole business sickens me at times!" he continued, smoking hard. "It's a child's game, Murgatroyd. Hang it! I hate to condemn my own flesh and blood, but what's the good of finding Spencer, supposing we do find him? If he wants a divorce, how can we stop him?"

"But he has absolutely no grounds for a divorce, Grahame."

"I know it, but what difference does that make? Lord! How many women have been divorced without just cause! Every State has its own divorce laws—

you know that—and a man gets the best of it every time. And if Spencer no longer loves his wife, why should we attempt to stop him securing a divorce? What's the use of marriage without love? What's the use of our trying to compel him to live with Eileen? She doesn't care a hang for the appearance of the thing. I know she'd rather know if she wasn't loved; she wouldn't be a wife merely on sufferance. And even the law can't compel a man to live with his wife; it can make him support her, and that's all. And if Spencer is such an unprincipled rascal that he'll desert his wife, pose as a bachelor, and secretly engage himself to another—well, that's a fine kind of a man to restore to any woman, isn't it? A fine prize she'll get! You see what I mean?"

"I've seen it from the first," said Murgatroyd dryly. "I agree with you that it's an open question whether we'll be doing Mrs. Grahame a kindness and service by restoring to her the man whose name she bears. As you say, it isn't a matter of financial support or outside appearances with her. It's an experiment, Grahame, but one I think it's our duty to make. Spencer may break her heart, and ruin her life all over again. On the other hand, he may be repentant, longing for an opportunity to redeem himself. I'm sure Mrs. Grahame would give him that chance, so we've no right to deny it."

"No, I suppose not, but it seems a pretty long chance to me," said Grahame bitterly. "Becoming secretly engaged to Miss Burr doesn't tend to show that Spencer's hankering after forgiveness or regeneration, or that he's so ashamed of himself that he's afraid to return. I wish I could believe that way, but I can't. But, anyway, Murgatroyd, this deception must end," he finished nervously. "It's ceased to be a question of Eileen or Spencer, and has come down to—me. I can't hold on any longer. I'm at the end of my tether."

He jumped to his feet, and paced the room, the doctor eying him in silence.

"It isn't a question of conscience, eh?" said Murgatroyd slowly at length.

Grahame laughed shortly.

"I think you know how it is with me," he said, facing the other. "I've seen you suspected. Who wouldn't?"

"I suspected it, Grahame, that day in the P. H. when you first broached this scheme."

Grahame dropped into a chair.

"It's a wonder, then, you agreed to the deception," he said harshly.

"I knew the man," said Murgatroyd kindly. "And could any one successfully play the rôle unless he was the lover? It was a hard test, Grahame, but I felt you were capable and worthy of it."

"I wonder if you'll ever know just how hard it was," said Grahame, with set face. "I'm only human, Murgatroyd, and I simply can't stand it any longer, for the tension has come near to snapping more than once. I needn't go into details, but perhaps you can realize what it means to merely be a play actor when in reality your soul's in the rôle, though you daren't show it. It wouldn't be so bad if I didn't love Eileen, and she wasn't my sister-in-law. The Lord knows I've shunned even the semblance of temptation. I've acted like a stick, like a prude; told the most abominable lies to avoid even the most casual intimacy. I can't permit even the most casual caress. You see how it is? It would be dishonorable to Spencer. As it is, I feel as if I were trying to get to windward of him—with his own wife. The thing simply can't go on. It's impossible. Eileen won't remain tractable and credulous forever. You and I know she's an invalid no longer. More than once I've been on the verge of taking her to the ends of the earth with me, and there living out our lives in defiance of everything! If this keeps up it may make a scoundrel out of me, after all!"

"I wouldn't call it that," said Murgatroyd. "True love is never that, Grahame. It's a question whether it wouldn't be the best thing, after all."

"It wouldn't," said Grahame harshly. "I put it up to Eileen—I told you about it. She's right. It would be best to know and suffer. You now see there was no sacrifice in my assuming the

rôle. It was pure selfishness. I knew it would be difficult, and yet I wanted to be with her."

"I choose to believe you were thinking primarily of her happiness," replied Murgatroyd. "I've come to know you pretty well, Grahame. Then you're quite satisfied the game's up?" he finished abruptly.

"When can this eye specialist see Eileen?" parried Grahame.

"I can make an appointment for Thursday. That's the earliest."

"Three more days," mused Grahame. "Make it Thursday, then."

"The operation will be trivial," pursued Murgatroyd, "and I'm confident it will be successful. It will then be necessary, you see, to confess the deception before Thursday. I mean, you wouldn't care to have Mrs. Grahame find it out for herself?"

"No, decidedly."

"Shall I tell her?" pursued the house physician. "I'll be glad to do it, if it'll make it any easier for you. She might take it better from her physician."

"No; I'll tell her, Murgatroyd. But thank you, all the same. I proposed this scheme, and must see it through. Eileen is physically able to hear the truth?"

"Yes," said the other, with a sigh. "In all fairness, I can no longer offer that plea as an excuse. Well, our deception has done some good. Mrs. Grahame has regained her health, and for that we should be thankful. She's physically able to hear the truth."

"Then she'll hear it before Thursday. It's better so. Putting it off only makes things worse."

But, despite this conviction, Grahame permitted "things" to become worse, for neither that night, Monday, nor the next, did he face Eileen with the truth, though he had told her of the appointment with the specialist on Thursday. More than once he had endeavored to lead both her and himself to the point where complete confession would be facilitated, but she refused to discuss hypothetical questions; she was in riotous spirits over the coming operation; so gay, so happy, so light of heart that

Grahame could not bring himself to bluntly state the truth. Confident of her returning sight, she was dating her life from the day of its full restoration—Thursday, the red-letter day; the day when she would see her husband.

Thus she dreamed and planned, Grahame assenting, while he knew that Thursday would probably be the blackest day of her life; the day when she opened her eyes on an empty world; the day when she lost, not gained, all. The thought of losing her awoke in him a fierce passion of protest, and he had not the courage to renounce her one moment before it was necessary. Wednesday he said nothing, but that evening he sought her out, contrary to all precedence, and at a sign from him Mrs. James left the room.

As he entered, Eileen arose, flushing with pleasure, and dropped him a curtsy.

"Is this a tardy recognition of the fact that I'm no longer an invalid?" she asked gayly. "I thought if I were patient I'd eventually have my reward, but it has been a dreadfully long time coming."

The room was in semidarkness, and in consequence the customary eye bandage had been dispensed with. As she stood facing him in the soft glow of the green-shaded reading lamp, Grahame once again experienced the same strange incredulity regarding her blindness. It seemed as if her eyes must be instinct with life, as if they were reading him through and through; and so momentarily startled was he that he involuntarily exclaimed:

"How do your eyes feel now, dear? Pain you at all?"

"Not a bit," she laughed. "Why?"

"Nothing—but they looked so peculiar," echoing her laugh.

"Then I won't let you see them," moving back into the shadow. "How do you mean peculiar? Have they changed color?"

"No; that's just it, Eileen. They were so bright and—er—living it startled me. Of course, it's a trick of the light. And then I haven't seen you for some time without that bandage. Are you sure

you can't see at all? That's one of those foolish questions—"

"No, it isn't," she demurely interrupted, "for I can see."

Grahame's face became bloodless, and instinctively he covered it with his hands.

"I mean," pursued Eileen, "that yesterday, when Mrs. James removed the bandage to bathe my eyes, I was conscious of light. I can't define it very well, but that describes it—just conscious of light. Where all had been dark, it was now a dull gray, flecked with funny little specks. It was as if I were looking through a heavy film; everything was hazy and blurred, and, of course, nothing was tangible or definite. I was totally unconscious of shape or outline, individually or in the mass."

"This is wonderful news!" exclaimed Grahame, steadying his voice, and stepping back into the shadows. "Why didn't you tell me yesterday? Fancy keeping it all to yourself!"

"I wasn't at all sure my imagination wasn't playing with me," she said slowly. "I didn't wish to raise up any false hopes even before myself."

"No, of course not, when it meant so much," Grahame agreed vaguely. "And yet, after all, this miracle was to be expected. We'd discounted it to a certain extent, hadn't we? We knew the nerves weren't dead, and that time and returning health would work their own cure. I've known people who've lost their hearing and the power of speech through measles, and these were eventually restored to them."

He was talking for time, remaining in the shadows. He didn't know as yet if he had come to confess too late; whether or not she would be able to discover the deception for herself.

"Perhaps," said Eileen, "an operation won't be necessary. Time alone may be enough."

"At all events, it will be trivial—Murgatroyd said so," assented Grahame. "I imagine it all depends on how far you've progressed. So this morning you found it wasn't imagination, eh? You were still conscious of light?"

"Yes—or what is light to me."

Grahame hesitated, then stepped into the full glow of the reading lamp.

"Look up, Eileen!" he commanded. "Look here! Can't you see me?"

She laughed in a troubled manner.

"No, I can't see you, Spencer. Don't ask the impossible. You're expecting too much of my poor eyes. Be patient. I'll see you some day."

Grahame wiped the sweat from his brow. Relaxation had come, the snapping of the tension, and he could not say whether he was glad or sorry he remained unmasked. He was sorry it remained to be done; glad it could be accomplished as gently as possible. He had acted on impulse, forgetting the awful shock Eileen would receive were her eyes able to identify him.

Here there came a knock on the door, and, at Grahame's command, Mrs. James entered with the announcement of a visitor in the drawing-room.

"A Mr. Brown," she added, looking hard at Grahame, and raising a warning finger. In eloquent pantomime she conveyed the information that he was to express no surprise; ask no questions.

Grahame's thoughts instantly turned to Mr. Adolphus Hock, for aside from Doctor Murgatroyd the student of risks had been the sole male visitor.

"I won't be long, Eileen," he said gently. "Merely a business visit, I expect. Please wait here until I return."

Mrs. James followed him to the hall, carefully closing the library door as she left.

"It's Mr. Spencer Grahame," she whispered. "At least, that's the name he gave. I intercepted the maid as she was coming here to announce him. Brown was the first name I could think of."

"Thank you," said Grahame composedly. "See that Mrs. Grahame doesn't leave the library until I return."

TO BE CONCLUDED.



In Lilac Time

LILAC time and loving time! Roving sunbeams stray
Through the dewy garden where lilac bushes sway;
Kiss the regal purple blooms and the dainty white;
Lilac time's a time of love, love and golden light!

Lilac time and loving time! Now the south winds blow,
Wave the graceful lilac flowers gently to and fro,
Whisper ardently among white and purple plumes;
Lilac time's a time of love, love and sweet perfumes!

Lilac time and loving time! Gayly winging by
With his mate beneath the blue of the fair spring sky,
Robin flutes enchanting notes, rapturous and strong;
Lilac time's a time of love, love and happy song!

Lilac time is here, my sweet! Through the blissful hours
Brilliant sunbeams and soft winds woo the lilac flowers;
Feathered gallants pour their hearts out in melody;
Lilac time is here, and love waits for you and me!

GRACE E. CRAIG.

AMERICAN IDEALISM

By Charles Battell Loomis

AN Irishman whom I met in his native country, but who had traveled extensively in the United States, told me without a touch of blarney in his tone that he thought Americans were the greatest idealists in the world. At the time he said it the only American news items I could find in the Irish papers were sordid details of the Thaw trial, so it did me good to hear him say it. I had suspected it before, but since then I have become convinced of it.

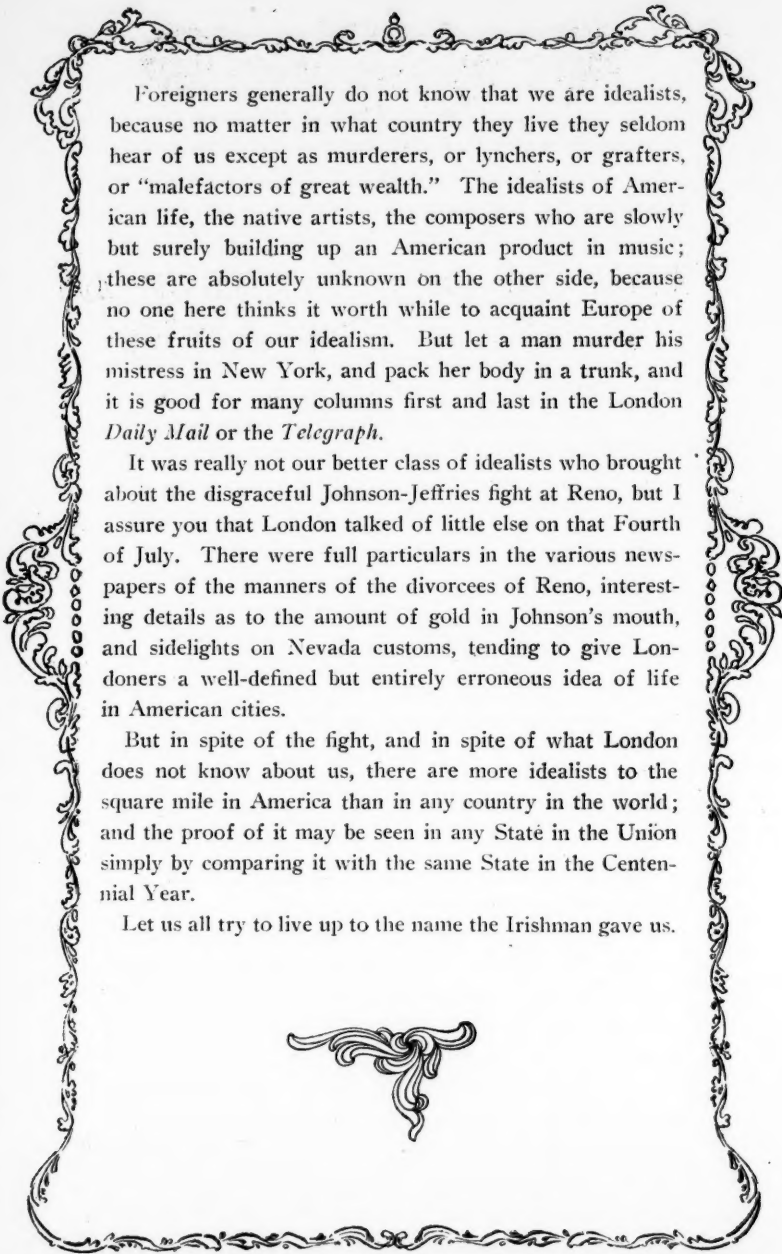
We are great dreamers, we Americans, and we put many of our dreams into effect.

In an idle moment a man dreams a daydream, in which he sees breathing places for the people in the heart of a city's slums. A generation ago he would have dismissed it as a dream not worth speaking about, a dream impossible of fulfillment; but now he tells his dream to public-spirited men in his town, and they tell him it is a good dream, and one that should be put into effect for the glory of the city. And in a few months you'll see pictures of that city, "before and after," in some periodical, showing trees of graceful growth and playgrounds where formerly there was a dumping ground or a hideous and overcrowded tenement.

That's the fruit of idealism.

Lincoln, the best type of American, was an idealist through and through, but he was a sane idealist. That's the sort of idealist we produce in America; men who can not only dream dreams, but make practical realities of them.

Jane Addams, Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot—here are a few of our idealists who are helping to make the world better than they found it, and they are all very American.



Foreigners generally do not know that we are idealists, because no matter in what country they live they seldom hear of us except as murderers, or lynchers, or grafters, or "malefactors of great wealth." The idealists of American life, the native artists, the composers who are slowly but surely building up an American product in music; these are absolutely unknown on the other side, because no one here thinks it worth while to acquaint Europe of these fruits of our idealism. But let a man murder his mistress in New York, and pack her body in a trunk, and it is good for many columns first and last in the *London Daily Mail* or the *Telegraph*.

It was really not our better class of idealists who brought about the disgraceful Johnson-Jeffries fight at Reno, but I assure you that London talked of little else on that Fourth of July. There were full particulars in the various newspapers of the manners of the divorcees of Reno, interesting details as to the amount of gold in Johnson's mouth, and sidelights on Nevada customs, tending to give Londoners a well-defined but entirely erroneous idea of life in American cities.

But in spite of the fight, and in spite of what London does not know about us, there are more idealists to the square mile in America than in any country in the world; and the proof of it may be seen in any State in the Union simply by comparing it with the same State in the Centennial Year.

Let us all try to live up to the name the Irishman gave us.





The Second Manner of Arthur John Kirke

By Ruth Kauffman

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

EVERYBODY knows that, three years ago, in the Universal Arts Exhibition, the critics noted a change, not only in the subject, but in the manner of treatment, of Arthur John Kirke's brush. Kirke had always painted children, charming, angel-faced children, and with such lightness and joyousness of touch as to make him one of the most popular, and, therefore, it may be, one of the most unreliable of his profession. But now he never paints a child; now he gives us the portraits of sad-faced men and women; none of his recent pictures lacks the quality of the morose.

It was three years ago when this startling metamorphosis occurred. Since then the new tendency has so steadily and so successfully developed that for some time past, both in France, which has art with no critics, and England, which has critics with no art, have admitted Kirke to be the master of cynicism in portraiture.

So much is known by all the world. What, however, scarcely any one will recall is that, just before the commencing of this revolution in his method, the artist lived for six months in a town of Pennsylvania-Germany; and almost nobody at all has so intimate a knowledge of Arthur John Kirke's life as

to find it possible to trace the effect in his second manner to the cause from Americus.

Kirke was, three years ago, a semi-invalid. He had just been operated upon for appendicitis, and, although his wife and he took daily exercise together for an hour, they walked very slowly. It was to get away from the noises and disturbances of a large city that the two had chosen the peaceful town of Americus, grown up in a curving hollow of the wonderful hills of central Pennsylvania, where the Susquehanna turns and dips and sweeps, a mile and a quarter wide, on its way from Harrisburg to the Chesapeake. That town is settled by a lapful of old English families descended from the time of Penn, by two dozen stable Germans with their industrious wives and sturdy children, by negroes not a few, and by a ruling population of Irish.

If, however, the alien Kirkes saw calm on the hills and heard now none of the boom of whizzing elevated trains, they soon discovered that, because of their irrelation to the town-ship's natural proprietors, they must suffer the mischievous molestations of unpoliced school children; for Americus boasted of its having no officers of the law to parade the streets.



Arthur John Kirke was shaking the boy with all his strength.

The shock to his nervous system by the operation had been severe, and consequently Arthur John Kirke fretted at these harmless personal attacks. His round, deeply set blue eyes would snap at the epithets that the smallest children called after them in their walks, and his thin fingers would contract. His wife—slim and girlish, and not long married—held her head high, and tried not to listen. She would, perhaps, grip her husband's arm the tighter; but she was not tortured as was Kirke.

It was on a snowy Sunday afternoon that the catastrophe chanced. At the corner of bisecting main streets, a group of children waited—eight or ten of them. Snowballs were tucked threateningly under their armpits, and in each boy's mittened left hand there was an unfinished sphere of snow, which his right hand patted and hardened.

Kirke and his wife turned the cor-

ner on their leisurely journey to the boarding house. The instant that their backs were toward the children, all the snowballs came in one volley at them, hitting their coats, their hats, their cheeks. A shriek of delight from the assailants cut the air. Arthur John blinked as he shook from the side of his face the cold, wet substance.

"Are you hurt, dear?" he asked his wife.

Before she could restrain her lips to dissimulation, she gasped "Yes"; and her husband clicked his teeth, for he saw that her eyes were wet.

He did not stop to contemplate that the shock of the snow might have been sufficient to cause the tears; he thought only of the insult and hurt to his young wife. He wheeled angrily. No child had thought of the advisability of running away, when the artist clutched the collar of the nearest.

"I didn't do it, mister! I didn't do it!"

But John Arthur Kirke was shaking the boy with all his strength, and his wife was watching, too much horrified to interfere. The other children, at a secure distance, encouraged the chastiser.

"Give it to 'im, mister! He done it, all right!"

The little boy began to whimper. Punishment was more than he or any one else had dreamed of; shame was unbearable. He kicked savagely. Kirke still held the collar, but his hands were becoming powerless to shake; so, with a final exertion, he pushed the child away, and the boy, freed sudden-

ly, sat down, amazed, into a snow heap.

"There!" said Kirke, breathless.

The children approached their fallen comrade. They continued loudly to jeer at him. He cried.

The last thing that Kirke and his distressed wife heard during the rest of their walk to their destination was the taunts of the small boys, directed mostly, they judged, at the boy in disgrace; the last thing Kirke himself felt was the final stinging snowball.

Twenty minutes later the doorbell of the boarding house rang.

The maid called the artist.

"Ye're wanted to the door, ma'am an' mister," she said; "an' he says he won't enter the house. There's fifty av them."

"Don't go!" pleaded his wife. "They might hurt you. Let me."

But Kirke had the artistic temperament that forced him to protect his own people as well as his own honor.

"If I were half a man, I'd spank every boy in this town! Their parents evidently don't know how to bring them up. It's abominable! I won't have you treated in this way."

He walked slowly to the door. Directly in front of him stood a large Irishman, the punished son at his side, wiping his eyes. On the sidewalk below, a crowd of boys looked up eagerly.

"What excuse," began the father, without the delay of preliminary greetings, "what excuse do ye offer fer attackin' this here boy?"

"Come in," said Kirke, "and I'll explain."

"I never enter no coward's house, sor; ye can give yer meanin' plain right here."

The contemplating children made Kirke's nerves tingle, but he said:

"This boy hit my wife and myself with snowballs. Every

boy does the same thing. I am tired of it. If the parents can't prevent their own sons from acting in this manner, I, as a stranger, will."

"For why did ye steal his cap an' knock him flat in the gutter?"

"I—I beg your pardon. I did not take his cap. I pushed him into the snow."

"Our Larry's a truthful boy, sor; he never tells no lies. He says he didn't chuck no snowballs."

"You are mistaken," Kirke replied coldly. "All the boys threw snowballs."

His wife attempted to corroborate his statement, but Kirke ordered her into the house.

"Larry never threw none," said the Irishman stubbornly. "Round home he



"What excuse do ye offer fer attackin' this here boy?"

never throws them. He's a good boy, is Larry. He never even touches the snow, let alone make snowballs of it—I doubt me if he knows what a snowball is, sor."

"Larry," asked Kirke, fixing his nervous blue eyes upon the boy, who had an air suspiciously angelic, "Larry, it's important always to tell the truth. I'm sure that your father would wish you to tell the truth. Did you throw any snowballs?"

"No, sir," answered Larry, in a small, injured voice, "an'"—he pulled at his trousers—"me pants is wet with the snow."

"If you did not throw any snowballs"—Kirke hesitated long enough for confession to come from the young lips, but none came—"if you did not throw any snowballs, I am sorry that I had to shake you. Are you quite certain that you are telling the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

The upturned face reminded the artist uncomfortably of a portrait, "Innocence," which he had just completed.

There followed several moments of silent awkwardness.

"Well," said the father, at length, "we'd as well be off—if that's all the excuse ye have in mind to offer fer yerself."

Kirke closed the door.

His wife caught his arm.

"It's all right, dearest," he said, brushing away. "The man has gone to search the gutter for the kid's cap. Did you hear him accuse me of taking it? The idea! I suppose he thought I'd buy the young rascal a new one!"

But on the following morning it did not appear so "all right." Kirke and his wife were roused at about seven o'clock; with their lifelong New York habits, they usually retired at one or two, and rose at nine. The maid called through the door:

"Ye're wanted to wance, please, he says. Ye're to come to the magistrate, wan av ye, or both, an' ye're arrested, an' the constable man's waitin' in the parlor. Must I tell him to go, fer ye're not up, er shall he come back later on in the mornin'?"

"Tell him to come back at about ten o'clock, Delia," said Mrs. Kirke.

Another moment, and the maid returned.

"He says he has orders not fer to go; but he'll wait till ye've got yer clothes on."

Husband and wife hurriedly dressed.

"What must I do?" asked the wife, with as little concern as possible.

"I suppose," Kirke answered irritably, "that you'll have to get me bail. I believe that is what is done when one is arrested."

Mrs. Kirke left her husband in the act of twisting on his necktie, and went to the parlor. She saw, seated facing her, a young man, dressed in ordinary citizen's clothes of country cut. He had a kind face and twinkling eyes, but he failed to rise at her entry into the parlor.

"Why do you arrest us?" she asked.

"It's not you, ma'am; it's him," said the constable, pointing with his thumb to the floor above. "The charge is assault and battery—beatin' up one of the MacMahon kids an' rollin' him in the gutter."

"But it's not true!" Mrs. Kirke's slim figure held itself very straight, and her large, brown eyes accused the constable of falsehood.

"I'm sorry, ma'am; I'm only an officer of the law."

"How much is the bail?"

"'Bout two hundred, I reckon; maybe the judge'll be easy on you."

"I'll give you a check."

"Won't accept of cash bail, ma'am; has to be real estate."

"We are strangers in this town; we have no real estate."

"Maybe you've got some friends hereabouts? Maybe the people here'll go your bail? It'd be hard on the town to have to put him in the rural lockup; they'd have to feed him."

When Kirke himself appeared, it was decided that his wife go immediately to the best lawyer in town. And, after numerous delays, it was this man who arranged for bail and placed the time of the hearing for the following night at eight-thirty.



"Larry's frail like. Cough, Larry, an' show the judge."

Much to the astonishment of the Kirkes, they found, upon entering the dilapidated, unpainted frame house, with its label of "Aloysius Welsh, Justice of the Peace," two dozen men and women, quietly waiting.

The room was papered in a flowery pattern forty years out of fashion, and the colors of the pattern were smoked to several indescribable shades of darkness. Benches circled the walls, and wooden chairs were carelessly placed about. One side of the wall was plastered with posters, offering rewards for escaped convicts and wanted offenders, and under these sat the constable, the father of the punished boy, and the punished boy himself. At the desk in the front of the room, like a silent and self-important schoolmaster, was planted the magistrate, Squire Aloysius Welsh, a mass of unkempt iron-gray hair covering his forehead, his eyes hidden behind large, steel-rimmed spectacles. The lawyer, defendant, and defendant's wife—his only witness—were placed behind the judge.

"Now we're all here," began the justice, "we'll begin."

The first witness to be sworn was a woman. She was a large, youngish woman, with a heavy, rustic figure that promised corpulency and good feeding

in middle age. She had dark hair and rather fine dark eyes. Her manner was hysterical, and it was clear that she had never testified before.

"I seen this Mr. Kirke," she said, "run after this here poor little boy. He had great difficulty tryin' to get away—I mean the boy. He shook him, an' then lifted him in his arms, an' he was no distance from our porch, an' I screamed—didn't I, Louise?" She sought assent from the blond woman that had accompanied her. "I screamed, an' he threw the boy with all his might into the gutter, an' the gutter was runnin' full three foot of water."

The lawyer for the defense asked a question.

"About how far," he asked, "do you think this gutter was from where you say Mr. Kirke threw this child?"

"Oh, ten foot, at least."

"You know how far ten feet are? That would be as far as I sit from where you stand."

"Then it must 'a' bin fifteen feet. It was an awful brutal thing for any man to do."

"You swear to this?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

An agitated sound clicked in the witness' throat. She looked at the boy,

dressed up and sitting bareheaded beside his father.

"He's such a dear little boy," she volunteered, "an' he was drippin' wet with the water, an' he cried. When I heard him cry, I thought sure he was killed. I guess I'd 'a' fainted if he had bin."

"Is that all?" thundered the magistrate.

The woman nodded, and the lawyer for the defense nodded.

"Next!" ordered the squire. "Mr. James Patrick MacMahon."

The burly father approached the book. He swore to tell the truth and nothing more.

"I wasn't on the spot when this here coward done his deed," said MacMahon; "but Larry never lies, an' another kid come runnin' up an' said he done it, yer honor, an' all the kids told me Larry never looked near the snow. This here man could 'a' clipped the right un, an' I'd not held it again' him, but he whaled my own son, an' shook him, an' chucked him in the gutter—an' his cap, too. Larry's a delicate boy, an' I doubt not he's caught his death. I should 'a' took him to the doctor, but I wanted to face down this brute an'

see if he could make his excuses. He could not, sor. He said somethin' of bein' tired of snowballs from the kids in town, so he picks up mine an' thrashes him. An' ye can see fer yerself, yer honor, Larry's frail like. Cough, Larry, an' show the judge."

Larry coughed from the bottom of his lungs, and the magistrate nodded gravely.

"What was the condition of your boy when you got him home?" asked the callow young man that advanced the case for the plaintiff.

"Well, sor, we undressed him after a while, an' his back was red an' all damp like, but"—the Irishman looked out of the corner of one eye at the book upon which he had sworn—"I wasn't rightly sure from the beatin' er the gutter work."

"James Patrick MacMahon, Junior," called the magistrate.

A youth with a blue squint rose clumsily. He appeared embarrassed while his eyes surveyed the onlookers, but a healthy ruddiness flamed in his cheeks upon glancing at his brother. He spoke in a loud voice, and rapidly:

"I'm a hearsay witness, yer honor. But me brother's me brother, an' I'll perfect him to an inch o' death."

"I object!" interrupted the defendant's lawyer.

A short spat between lawyers resulted with no more serious effect than that James Patrick MacMahon, Junior, proceeded. He glared at the opposing member of the bar, and shook his fist toward Kirke, whose thin figure scarcely filled its chair, and whose thoroughly evident invalidism should have been sufficient confutation of the testimony of the plaintiff.

"Me brother's most a baby, sir. He never done no harm. Look at the poor innocent sittin' like a young angel yonder! He come home drippin' with the wet water, an' he said a strange man chased him an' laid vicious hands on him, an' shook him cuz he didn't chuck no snowball. The man wouldn't 'a' dared try it on me, sir, but he took a kid that couldn't do nothin' back but kick, an' he chucked him in the gutter.



A hard, dirty snowball was instantly thrown with violence into one of the windows.

Larry was all red an' purple, an' he coughs ever since."

From the brother, the witnesses continued in a procession of nearly twenty—all men and women summoned from the houses along the street where the shaking had occurred. The lawyer for the defense leaned close to Kirke, and whispered:

"They do it for the fee, you know. They get fifty cents apiece, and, of course, you're a stranger."

Finally the evidence was all heard from the witnesses for the plaintiff and from the plaintiff himself. The defendant and his wife were not called, their testimony deemed, no doubt, unnecessary or untrustworthy; but their lawyer rose, pleading guilty to the technical charge of assault and battery. He explained the motives, and set forth in quiet, logical phrases to the disapproving auditors what his clients had told him to be the truth of the case. The best of the testimony of the defense was withheld, by his instructions, for use in event of the case being held for court.

The magistrate scratched his head. He turned to MacMahon.

"I advise you to have me dismiss this thing with costs," he said. "You'll both sides spend a heap o' money if you go on; an' if you go to court, the jury's sure to make you pay half, MacMahon. I know 'em, an' I warn you."

MacMahon and his various sons protested violently.

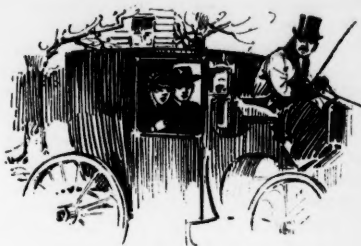
"Never!" shouted the father, his temples swelling. "I don't care nothin' about the money; what I'm after is havin' this here base coward punished the same way like my son."

"You'll get little o' that if you take the case on," advised Welsh.

"That's my mind," said MacMahon decisively, plainly under the delusion that he possessed such an organ; and his sons nodded approval.

"Well," said the justice of the peace, "come ahead with me."

He led the way to an inner room, and he indicated with his head the favored few. They were MacMahon, fa-



ther, his sons, his lawyer, and two bosom friends.

Silence held the stuffy courtroom while this unprejudiced jury deliberated.

In ten minutes the troop returned.

"Under advisement," said Squire Welsh. "Saturday night at seven-thirty. Nobody's got to come but him." Him was Kirke, indicated by the butt of a penholder clenched in the gnarled fingers of Justice. "I'll put the bail at two hundred and fifty."

"I'll go his bail," said Kirke's lawyer; and, after a signing of papers, the assemblage shuffled away.

But this was only the mildest part of the artist's trouble. Now Kirke and his wife were altogether denied outdoor exercise, for they suffered too much from the jeers of the urchins to brave the streets.

"Him's the man that's bein' sued!" one would shout, and the group would run, several tempting Kirke again to violence by the use of snow. They did not, however, again stand within his reach.

The *Americus Daily Newsmonger* printed thrilling accounts of the episode, referring to Kirke as an idle tourist stranger, who had no better employment for his hands than to paint pictures and to deal roughly with the minor sons of such highly respectable citizens as James Patrick MacMahon, the father of a large family and a steady workman on the railroad.

People of the town wrote letters of disapprobation; several told the artist what he really should have done had he been snowballed by this boy, if he had been snowballed by any boy at all.

The brothers, aunts, and cousins of young Larry constantly called by the telephone to remind Arthur John Kirke of what they thought of him, and to tell him of another place, as quiet as Americus, that would welcome him.

MacMahon's lawyer threatened civil suit to recover damages for soiled clothes and injured feelings.

Nevertheless, payment of costs was the actual extent of the decision of Squire Aloysius Welsh, who, on Saturday night, told Kirke the meaning of his crime, and declared that the leniency was due only to the fact that this was a first offense.

"I'll remit the fine," said the justice.

"But," said Kirke to his lawyer, as they left the office, "I didn't know that he had any right to impose a fine."

"He hasn't," the lawyer replied; "but he remits it, anyhow. That's just his kindly way."

The costs, a small matter, had been cheerfully paid. But still the troubles were not over.

The rumors came in a few days through the maid, Delia.

"Ye know," she said, "the reason why Larry MacMahon's not to school's on account av his bein' sick. The snow's not said to be agreein' with the kid. Leastways, 'tis that the family's givin' out."

Again the telephone bell sounded with frequency for Arthur John Kirke. His wife warded off the attacks whenever possible, but even she was one day terrified by the words of the plaintiff's lawyer.

"I'm sorry to tell you, ma'am," that man said, "seein' you weren't the guilty party, that little Larry's down with the pneumonia. Now, I know the old man—Mr. MacMahon, I mean, beggin' his pardon—is intendin' to bring suit for damages. But I'm sure you an' the mister'll like to be warned, and would prefer to settle out of court. Therefore, I suggest—"

"Won't you come right over?" Mrs. Kirke asked impulsively.

She hurried to her husband, and re-

peated the conversation. He tore at his thin hair.

"I'm going to see this man," she said, "not you, please. And, dear, wouldn't it be best to offer him some money to end things? I'm so sorry about the child! Do you believe—"

"Nonsense!" declared Kirke, turning from her nervously. "Nonsense! I hardly touched him. Yet—"

"That's just it, dear. He did have an awful cough at the magistrate's office."

"He might have had that cough before."

"All the worse. The shaking may have increased it. Wouldn't it be awful if he died?"

Mrs. Kirke's interview with the lawyer for the other side strengthened her fears, for he told her that MacMahon had said, only a few hours before, that Larry was very low. The father, it seemed, was vowing vengeance. Nothing could recompense the injury and the loss; but, of course, fifty dollars in cash, handed over at once, would go far toward taking care of the doctor's bills, and might even be considered sufficient to avert further legal proceedings. He, not as a lawyer, but as a man, naturally interested in the fortunes of his client, as well as in peace for both sides, was merely setting forth the situation. What did she intend to do?

Fifty dollars was at that moment a good deal for the Kirkes to expend; but Kirke and his wife agreed that if fifty dollars would really clean the slate, they would hand it over. The lawyer for MacMahon, moving as mediary between offenders to client, finally accepted the fifty dollars, and gave in return the assurance that James Patrick MacMahon would relieve his feelings in court no further for this particular offense.

"And now," announced Kirke, pale and worn, after the negotiations were completed and the lawyer had left, "we're going."

"Going?"

"At once. We leave this place tomorrow morning. I want no more fin-

gers of justice fumbling with you and me."

"But the quiet?" objected his wife.

"Damn the quiet!"

That is the one occasion in his life when Arthur John Kirke lost control of his language.

"We can't hunt for another place in a day," continued the woman. "Where in the world can we go?"

"Where to go? Where? There's only one place, my dear—we go back to New York. It's more quiet in an old-law tenement on the East Side than it is here!"

She, too, was by no means unwilling to return, and it took her only the rest of the afternoon and evening to pack the trunks, pay the board in advance for a week, in lieu of "notice," and attend to the expressage of undelivered laundry. She even ordered a carriage to protect them during the short distance from the house to the station.

Had they not been disturbed about the health of Larry MacMahon, they would have been very happy in the prospect of leaving Americus. They kept saying to each other that they were happy. But all night long, neither slept for more than a few moments at a time. The memory of Larry's cherub face, and of his cough in the office of the justice of the peace, haunted them. They saw him on his bed, struggling for breath, his cheeks white, with the blue veins showing. When the early milk cart rattled along the street below, Mrs. Kirke, wakened suddenly, clutched her husband's arm, fearing that in some way the sound announced the child's death. Husband and wife were haggard when they finally rose.

The morning was a beautiful one—

cold, wintry, with an invigorating crispness in the atmosphere. The beds of the roads were snowless, but frozen hard; the sidewalks clear, but along their edges was piled snow whose whiteness was nearly gone.

The wife's impulse was to telephone to the MacMahons before setting forth, but her husband restrained her on the ground that to telephone might merely renew hostilities. In his own heart, he was afraid of the response that she might receive to her inquiries.

"He's very low, ma'am," had been the parting words of the lawyer. "An' I understand perfect how you'd feel if anything was to happen to him."

"He's very low" were the words that rang in the runaways' ears as they entered the carriage. They sat absolutely silent.

The vehicle turned a corner.

As if it were waiting for them, a hard, dirty snowball was instantly thrown with violence into one of the windows, and fell in broken pieces upon their laps. The face of the small boy that threw it was unmistakable, and the small boy himself laughed lustily when he leaped away.

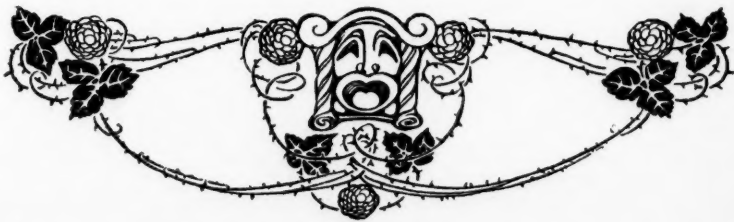
"Did you see?" asked the woman, her brown eyes disbelieving what they had seen.

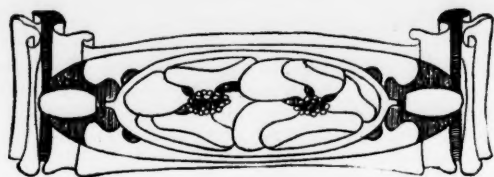
"Yes," said Kirke solemnly.

"But——"

"I know, I know!" agreed the artist, and in his voice there was evidence of a great weariness. "Fifty dollars will buy a good deal. Larry got well over-night."

From that moment the future biographer will date the beginning of Kirke's second and more masterful manner.





The Valley

By Ellen Childs Emerson

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

A VINDICTIVE gust of wind swept across the empty Exercierplatz, and flicked Milly's boa sharply against her cheek. She tucked her violin case more securely under her arm, saying to herself: "If I didn't love Germany too well to admit it, I should call it a beastly climate!"

In spite of the young leaves on the linden trees, and the Easter hares in the confectioner's windows, winter seemed to have come back with a jump, and the pale crocuses in the Public Garden shivered forlornly in the nipping air.

Milly was cold, and she felt her courage flag. Yesterday she had been sure of herself, but then the sun was shining, and a thrush sang hopefully in the tree by her window. Doubts were born and thrived in this raw east wind, under the gray sky. She walked faster to keep up her spirits, and, turning into a dark doorway in a narrow street, she ran up the four flights without a pause, and arrived, breathless and panting, at the top floor.

A large square visiting card fastened to the door by four thumb tacks informed the curious at some length that Carl Thienemann was a concertmeister and member of the Grand Ducal Court Orchestra.

Milly read it over for the hundredth time, while she recovered her breath, then pulled a white china handle, which set a bell loudly jangling, and a voice within, somewhat unnecessarily, cried:

"Sabina, it rings!" After a little splashing and shuffling, which suggested aquatic gambols, a lank, flat-chested maid opened the door a grudging three inches, relaxed into a smile at the sight of a familiar face, and calling, in a shrill treble, "Frau Thienemann, it is the miss!" shuffled away, and appeared to plunge bodily into a pail of dirty water that gleamed dully in the dark passage.

A slender little woman with sweet, dark eyes came from the open kitchen door with a huge loaf of bread under her arm, and a murderous-looking knife in her hand.

"Ah, Fräulein Milly, you are early. My husband is only just up, but if you will have patience a little quarter of an hour. He will be inconsolable to make you wait, but he was kept at rehearsal unbelievably late last night."

Here she was interrupted by an agonized voice: "Lenchen, *um Gotteswillen*, where is my collar, dear heart?" and flew to help her lord complete his toilet, leaving an adorable blond baby, who had been clinging to her skirts, to philosophically transfer his grasp to Milly's hand. Carichen approved of "the miss," who cuddled him and brought him sweeties, and when they had gone together into the little living room, half filled by a grand piano, he nestled contentedly into her arm on the sofa, crooning a little song to himself, and patting her muff.

She hugged him close to her as she

realized that she was going to say good-by to the happy-go-lucky, friendly little household that had meant so much in her life for over a year. She had grown to love the sleepy German town, and her busy, pleasant life in the cosmopolitan set of students, who painted, and fiddled, and sang scales all day, and sat in the cheap seats at the opera at night.

She adapted herself quickly to new surroundings, and she could not remember being homesick, even at first.

"But I shall be homesick enough when I leave," she said ruefully, half to herself and half to Carlchen. "Oh, I wonder if I really want to go back; I wish you could tell me, baby."

"Carlchen is *not* baby," returned her small friend indignantly, wriggling out of her embrace onto the floor, and reproaching her with big, serious blue eyes. "Yesterday I was four—thou *knowest* I was four, for thou didst eat of my birthday cake!"

He stumbled over the long German word, but struggled through it manfully, and Milly, laughing and repentant, knelt quickly beside him to make her peace.

"Oh, Carlchen, darling, forgive me! How wicked of me to forget those four wonderful candles! But really, baby is only a love name, it does not mean—"

She scrambled to her feet, as a tall, loosely built man came hurriedly in, a grown-up Carlchen, with the same alluring smile and waving, yellow hair. He apologized for his "laziness" in a pleas-

ant, musical voice, taking Milly's hand in a gentle clasp, with a violinist's consideration for precious fingers.

"I am not going to take a lesson, Herr Concertmeister, but will you give me the time, just the same, please? I want to talk to you," she said, with a little tremble in her voice.

"Surely, Fräulein Milly. You are not in trouble, I hope? Carlchen, give papa a kiss for good morning, and then run away to *Mütterchen*, little son."

Carlchen trotted obediently out of the room, flinging back a defiant "*Bin doch kein baby!*" over his shoulder, and his father drew up a chair so that he could look into Milly's face, a kind concern in his nearsighted blue eyes.



"Frau Thienemann, it is the miss!"

"Herr Concertmeister, I am not going to take any more lessons—ever! I am not going to be a musician. I shall give my violin to the little Meyersohn. I am not worthy of it. I have no more talent than—than a cow!"

Her speech of renunciation, so carefully planned, had all melted away, and at the lame conclusion to the succession of jerky little sentences, she laughed nervously at herself, but nevertheless with a sense of relief at getting it over.

"Fräulein Milly! My dear child, you are mad!" Then his tone changed. "Ah, I know what is the matter; you have been working too hard, and are worn out, and so you find it impossible to shake off the discouragement that comes to every one of us at times. Do I not understand what it is to feel that one might better be breaking stones on the road than breaking one's heart in the attempt to serve art worthily? I, too, have been in the depths—*ach Gott*, how often! And even now sometimes I am disheartened, although the gods have been very good to me, and given me more success than I deserve. You must do less practicing for a time. Believe me, these—how do you say in English?—blue imps—will go away when you have had a rest."

"Oh, it is not that. I am quite well and strong, and not in the least tired. I am only convinced that I can never make anything of it; it is not in me. I don't say I have not made progress; it would be a poor tribute to your patience and your skill to deny that, but I shall never arrive."

"Dear Fräulein Milly, we none of us reach to the heights we see above us. An artist is always looking up. It may be because of that we so often stumble and hurt ourselves against the rocks of life, and are unpractical and thriftless. I will be honest with you. I do not say that you are a genius, but you can do much, and give much pleasure to yourself and to others. I know, too, that you want to earn your living, and I give you my word that you can make yourself capable of teaching."

"Ah, that is one of my arguments; I should simply detest teaching, and no

one would ever employ me, because I should beat the beginners over the head with their own violins when they squeaked or flatted! And as for giving myself pleasure, my own playing distresses me more than I can express to you. No, dear master, really I am right. Let me tell you a little about myself, and you will understand:

"When my father and mother died, I went to live with my married sister. Dick, my brother-in-law, is a doctor with a country practice, and not much money, and there are swarms of children. They are dear lambs, and I love them; but when there are so many in a small house it does get on one's nerves. I helped in the house, of course, as I grew older; but my father was musical, and impressed me as a child with the idea that I was a genius, so I felt it was a waste of my life and my talents to write out bills for Dick, or scrub dirty little paws.

"When Dick's assistant came, Roger Haddon, fresh from three years in German hospitals, he sympathized with me, and thought my playing wonderful, and finally he got your address from a German friend. The rest you know—how I came here, so cocksure and confident, and how quickly you stripped my conceit from me, in the kindest way. And after a while I stopped thinking so much about myself, and my achievements, and grew to love the music for its own sake, and to humbly try to understand it. And so, by degrees, I came to love it so well that I knew I could never do more than love it, never interpret it like a real artist, never do more than play the notes, and get a certain amount of technique through hard work and good instruction; but the real soul of it all that makes a musician I should always miss.

"I must have had this at the back of my mind a long time, but it was hearing the little Jew, Meyersohn, last Sunday, that showed me in a flash where the difference lay between him and me, between the artist and the amateur. A poor, half-educated, half-starved little lad, playing on a wretched violin, but he was *real*.

"Dear master, these months haven't



• "Fräulein Milly! My dear child, you are mad!"

been wasted. You have taught me so much that I shall never forget of the meaning and inspiration of music, and I can listen now, and understand its language as I never could before. That is a great deal, and I am very, very grateful to you for that, and for all your kindness and friendship. Believe me, I have not decided lightly, for it has been a struggle. I have built castles in Spain, and it is hard—bitterly hard—to see them crumbling about me; but if they are founded on a mistake, isn't it better to give it all up, and spend the time just being the ordinary, everyday person the good Lord made me, and write bills and wash dirty little paws?

"Oh, dear! I didn't mean to cry. What a fool you will think me! And I'm truly not unhappy about it at all," she sobbed.

There was silence for a long time in the shabby, pleasant little room. Milly dabbed her eyes with a wet ball of a handkerchief, and gradually regained her self-control. Thienemann stood at the window, tugging at his mustache, his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the wind-tossed elm branches outside, while a fitful gleam of chilly sunshine fell on the fair head that was so ridiculously like Carlchen's. He had a deep affection for the sweet-natured, quick-witted American girl, who was so much more intelligent than many of his pupils, although he admitted to himself that she had not underestimated her musical gifts.

He sometimes looked forward wistfully to the time when he should choose his pupils according to real talent and ability, when teaching should be always a pleasure, not, as now sometimes,

drudgery, only to be borne by thinking of Lenchen and the boy, and the dear old father and mother, whose support he would not call a burden, even to himself.

But the time of choosing pupils was not yet. There were lank little girls, who could not tune their own violins, and fat-headed boys, in whom fond mammas hoped he could awaken some soul for music, who gave him weary half hours. And Milly had always been a joy to him; sympathetic and industrious, and so gay over her own mistakes that many lessons ended in laughter. Was she right? he wondered. Could he honestly concur in this sudden decision to give it all up?

Then he heard from the next room Carlchen's sweet little pipe, calling for his mother:

"*Wo bist Du, lieb Mütterchen?*" And a new idea brought a swift smile to Carl Thienemann's lips.

When at length he turned to her, Milly saw only sympathy and comprehension in the kind blue eyes.

"You are very brave and very honest, my child. God forbid that I should try to force you into a life for which you are not fitted. In this you are right; a musician must feel that only in music *can* he express himself; he has no choice. And so I must let you go, dear child, go to the life that calls you. We shall miss you—Lenchen, and the boy, and I—but you will not forget us, I know, for you have a faithful heart for your friends, and you will come back some day, *nicht wahr?*"

"And do not cease to build your castles, dear. What would our life be without our dreams? If it is not to be in music that you build, perhaps it will be in—love!"

"Tell me," he asked gently, his hand on her shoulder, "will you then go back to the many babies and the doctor brother-in-law, or is there some one else for whom you will—write bills?"

Milly's own sunny smile shone through her tears.

"Roger Hardon wants me to marry him," she said.



On Wings

THEY tell a thing of old Japan,
A land dream-warped like tapestry:
That when the men walk knee to knee
Bearing what was another man,
While temple bells rock to and fro,
The people of that gentle creed
Set free a flower-white dove, to speed
The soul the way it yearns to go.

Sweet, when my time shall come to lie
Pale, solemn, and my friends shall bear
My quiet body out to share
The rest of grass-wrapped slumberers nigh,
One snowy thought of thine set free!
So long to me those miles of sky,
So true thy chart, that as I fly
That thought's white wing shall succor me!
JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



Goldylocks and Little Bear

By Parker H. Fillmore

Author of "The Young Idea," "The Hickory Limb," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

"Oh!" gasped the girl. The man at the big table, looking up and seeing some one at the door, threw down his pencil savagely, and exclaimed:

"The hell!"

Then he sprang to his feet in tardy embarrassment.

"I beg your pardon! I thought you were Ma Bascombe's hired man, William. William, you know, never comes up here to remind me of dinner that he doesn't interrupt me at a most critical moment. And I knew I had had dinner once to-day. Will you come in?" he asked hospitably, opening the screen door. "Or shall we sit on the porch?"

"I knocked," the girl said, "and when nobody answered, I peeped in, and the fireplace was so pretty, I said: 'Oh! And then you——'"

"Don't mind me," the man said hastily. "Do sit down and enjoy the woods."

"As I came in," the girl said, "I was hoping there was no one at home, for then I was going to try that little, squat chair. It doesn't look as though it would break, does it?"

"Break?" the man said.

"Well, you know the Little Bear's chair did break."

The man looked from the chair to the girl in such evident bewilderment that the girl laughed.

"I forgot to tell you. My name's Goldylocks. I've been hunting the House of the Bears all my life. When I was a small child, I used to run away to the woods whenever I could, and—I do yet. I get lost all the time, but never until this afternoon have I come upon anything that looks at all like the house

I've been hunting. Then, when I saw this dear little shack, with the big bench over there, and the nice, middle-sized chair you're going to sit down on, and the little, squat one I want, I said to myself: 'Now!' I knocked at the door just to make sure there was nobody at home, and then you spoiled it all by saying——"

"Please now," the man began, "I wish you'd let up on that. I tell you I thought you were Ma Bascombe's William, and I felt sure he had been here once to-day. William, you know, is rather heavy as to mind, and you have to be emphatic."

"You needn't find fault with William," the girl protested. "It's I who have reason to find fault. I've been tramping the woods for hours, and I'm very hungry and thirsty, and I supposed, of course, I'd find three bowls of porridge just waiting for me."

"Wouldn't tea do?" the man suggested. "I've got some Educators, too."

"Yum, yum!" murmured the girl. Then she paused. "Thank you, I don't believe I can. What would Aunt Adeline say? I don't even know who you are. I—I suppose you're the brother of my dearest friend in town, only I haven't any dearest friend in town."

"No, I'm not," the man insisted. "I'm nobody's brother. I'm only Little Bear. Don't you remember me? I've been waiting years to have you come back."

"H'm, Little Bear," the girl repeated, casting a doubtful eye over some six feet of well-set-up manhood. "You've grown some, haven't you? I shouldn't have known you. But I suppose little bearses do grow up to be big bearses. I've grown some, too."

"Really?" the man asked, raising incredulous eyebrows.

"Why, of course I have!" the girl declared. "I used to be much littler. And my dusky locks were really golden then. That's why granny named me. I don't know now. I'd like to stay. If only the Middle-sized Bear would come out and chaperon us, I'm sure Aunt Adeline——"

"I live all alone now," the man said.

"You know, people have a theory that literary work turns an amiable bear into a regular man. So they advised me long ago to get a little shack of my own where I could work uninterrupted. That's the way they put it."

"So you are a writer, aren't you? I knew you were the moment I saw that table all piled up in such—what is it you writers like to call it?—such bohemian confusion. Once I had almost decided to be a writer myself."

"Indeed!" The man's tone had become perfumatory.

"Yes. Then I became so interested in cooking I gave it up."

"Oh!" he said, with renewed interest. "So you're a cook now?"

"Yes. I'm a fine cook. O-oh! You just ought to taste my fried mushrooms! And I can trim hats, too, bee-yu-tif'ly! That's because I'm Irish. Granny was Irish, too. Dear granny!"

"Tell me about granny. But let me start the kettle first."

"I'd like to, Little Bear, but wait a second while I think. I could accept a glass of water from you, but a cup o' tea is different."

"Shucks! There's the alcohol lamp, and the tea caddy, and the cracker box all waiting. It would be absurd for you to go away hungry."

"Well, Little Bear, if I were perfectly sure that—that—that you wouldn't bite!"

"Bite? Why, Goldylocks, bears don't bite! Bears——"

He stopped with a quick laugh, and the girl jumped to her feet, her mouth quivering, but her eyes a little frightened and her cheeks aflame.

"I—I think I'd better go."

"Please, Goldylocks," the man begged. "That was only a slip of the tongue. Believe me, Little Bear is perfectly harmless. He has lived so long with little men in little cities that ages ago he forgot every strong, primitive impulse he may once have had. Nowadays all the Goldylockses he meets give him, not emotion, but just so much copy."

"Am I copy?"

For a moment he looked into her soft,

gray eyes, and considered the little smiles that were playing such charming hide and seek around the corners of a whimsical mouth. Then he spoke with unexpected emphasis:

"Indeed, you're not! You're an afternoon off when the sky is blue, and the woods are cool, and the smell of the pines makes one forget the dust of the road and the grind of the morning."

"Oh!" sighed the girl, dropping back into the little, squat chair. "Can't one say perfectly beautiful things when one has a literary training?"

"Yes," assented the man, drawing over the big-sized bench for the alcohol lamp and the teapot, "it does help sometimes."

He lit the alcohol, then went back to the middle-sized chair.

"Now, while we wait for the water to boil, tell me about granny."

"Granny? Oh, granny was a dear! She was small like me, and her hair was dark, too. We were always taken for mother and daughter. I never knew my mother, so granny was mother and grandmother both to me. We weren't very well off when I was small, and we lived in a tiny, little house. My, it was fun! I suppose it was there I got my start in cooking, and in trimming hats, too, for we did everything ourselves. Then, when I was twelve, the money came, and we had to go to town and be rich."

"Rich?" the man said. "I've never had a chance to try it. Was it nice?"

"Not very. The relations worried us so. They had never paid any attention to us before, but in New York they were after us all the time. So were the lawyers, and the investment people, and the charity people, and all kinds of queer beggars. We hadn't a moment to ourselves; really we hadn't. We stood it as long as we could. Then we bolted."

"Pardon an interruption," the man said. "Ma Bascombe allows me only one cup up here. So you drink first, then I'll take some."

"But I want two cups," the girl said. "I always take two cups of tea."

"Goldylocks," the man remonstrated,

"don't be unreasonable. Can't you take your second cup after I have a drop?"

"No, Little Bear. I always have a cup to myself. Haven't you a shaving mug, or something that you could use?"

"Ye-es; but it's kind o' soapy."

"Soapy? Don't you ever wash it? Goodness! Give it to me."

He brought out the mug, and she gave him a lesson in dishwashing. Then she dared him to call his tea soapy.

"It tastes queer, anyway," he grumbled.

"H'm! You couldn't have traveled with granny and me and make a fuss over drinking out of a nice mug like that!"

"Is that what you did when you bolted? Traveled?"

The girl nodded.

"Nobody knew where we were but old Mr. Simms, the lawyer, and granny wouldn't let him tell. We went to France first, and lived about in the dearest little, out-of-the-way places. We stayed on wherever we happened to land until we got tired of it. After two years we came home so that I shouldn't forget how to speak English, granny said, and we lived up here in New England until one day Aunt Adeline happened to find us."

"The same Aunt Adeline?"

"Yes."

"Tough luck! What did you do then?"

"We bolted again. We went to England, and then to Italy. And we traveled just as we liked, now by boat, now by carriage, now by train; and we tried lodgings, and little houses, and pensions, and apartments. Oh, it was lovely, and we had such good times together, granny and I. We were getting ready for Japan when suddenly it all stopped. Granny died."

"I'm sorry," murmured the man.

"Three years ago now. I was nineteen."

Neither spoke for a moment. Then the man said:

"Goldylocks, you don't look twenty-two. I didn't think you were more than seventeen."

"But I am twenty-two—nearly. It is

because I'm small, and this skirt is short. Oh, I'm twenty-two—nearly. And I'll be glad when it's over."

"When what's over?"

"My birthday."

"Why?"

The whimsical expression which a little earlier had made the girl's face so happy and childlike was gone, and she looked older now and sad.

"It was granny's strange will. I don't understand it. Granny was so sensible and sweet, and I know she loved me. Well, I've had a lovely afternoon, Little Bear, and I'm grateful. I hope I may some time get lost again, and find a kind little bear to give me tea."

"Please get lost again," the man begged. "The morning is my work time, but I'd love to see you any afternoon."

The girl shook her head.

"If granny were here I'd bring her with me, and then I know it would be all right. She'd love to come. She always loved to do everything. But Aunt Adeline would have an awful fit if she knew I picked up with—with bears and lions! I suppose you are a lion in town, aren't you?"

"No. I've never written a best seller."

"That makes it all the more shocking—in Aunt Adeline's eyes, I mean. Come, tell me how to get home. I came up the hillside behind the shack; but there must be an easier, more conventional way down."

"There is. You wouldn't guess it; but I'm right in sight of the post office. Come inside, and I'll show you."

He opened the screen, and led her to the west window of the little shack—which wasn't so little once you got inside. There, below them, some distance away, but in plain sight, lay the pike, and the straggly line of houses which, from both directions, led to that focus of village life, the general store and post office. As they looked, the afternoon stage drew up.

"Here," the man suggested. "Try my field glasses. You'll be able to make out the people easily."

He twirled the screws, taking the first peep himself.

"H'm!" he remarked, handing the glasses over. "Looks like a man I know on the front seat."

The girl adjusted the lens, looked for an instant, then laid the glasses down.

"Who—who do you think it is—on the front seat?"

"Looked to me like Loder, the bucket-shop man."

"Bucket shop? What's that?" But, without waiting for an answer, the girl went on: "Yes, it is Mr. Loder. He's Aunt Adeline's broker, and—and she wants me to marry him."

"Goldylocks!" the man cried. "You're not going to marry *him*, are you? No! You mustn't! Why, he's all sorts crooked."

"I don't know," the girl said hopelessly. "Aunt Adeline wants it, and granny's will is so queer. It has to be decided within two weeks now; by the day I'm twenty-two. Oh, I wish—I wish I were a poor writer! You don't have to marry any one, do you, Little Bear?"

"I?" The man laughed a little grimly. "No. I don't have to marry any one. And, if I wanted to, I think I shouldn't have the courage. I can pull through the lean months for myself, all right; but I shouldn't want a woman dependent on the uncertainties of my income. It's probably just as well, though. Literary bears are such uncomfortable things to have about the house. You know, when they get interested in their work they forget everything else for days and weeks at a time, and I don't believe a woman likes to be forgotten that way. I'm afraid it hurts her. Yet if she insists upon interrupting her bear to be assured that he still loves her at a moment when he has clean forgotten that there are such creatures as himself and her—well, you know it plays the very deuce with his work, not to mention his temper. So, as I say, on the whole it's probably better."

"Tell me," the girl said. "Are lady writers bears, too?"

"No, Goldylocks. Lady writers are merely jokes."

"Huh!" sniffed the girl haughtily. "Literary bears, I see, are just as jealous as literary men." Then she chuckled. "So you think, Little Bear, I did right to give up literature for cooking?"

"Right?" said the man enthusiastically. "I should say you did! But, Goldylocks," he went on, as the girl turned to go, "it worries me to have you think of marrying Loder; honestly it does."

"It worries me, too," the girl said quietly. She had reached the end of the porch, and turned to make her adieus. "Good-by again, Little Bear, and thanks for the tea. This is the little path I'm to follow, isn't it? Don't come with me. I know now where I am. This will bring me to the little hill road that runs down to the pike just west of the post office. Good-by."

"But, Goldylocks," the man begged, "you'll come again, won't you?"

She paused a moment, and shook her head.

"I don't see how I can, Little Bear."

The man watched her swaying slowly down the path. He wanted to run after her, and bring her back. He wanted to do any number of utterly foolish, impossible things which he didn't do because he realized they were utterly foolish and impossible. A moment more and the little path would make a turn, and she would be lost even to sight.

"Goldylocks!" he shouted.

She turned, and waited.

"Please—*please* get lost again."

She said nothing, but smiled and shook her head slightly. Then she waved her hand, turned again, and walked on.

The man went inside at last, and planted himself at the west window. He couldn't see the little, hilly road down which she was walking; but if he waited long enough, he would see her when she



"Who—who do you think it is—on the front seat?"

reached the pike. Ages passed, and he wondered had she gone the other way. He had vaguely supposed she had come from the Clem Turner place. Maybe she hadn't.

"Damn!" he growled.

Finally her little figure appeared. She stopped a moment, and looked up. Through his glasses he could see her trying to pick out the shack from the wooded hillside. Suddenly she smiled, as though she had found it. Then she waved her handkerchief. Of course, she must have known that he was watching.

He laughed loud and happily, waving frantically in return.

Then the little figure walked on again, slowly, sedately, on past the post office, past the library, and so out of his vision.

The man sat where he was a long

time. Then he got up, and looked at himself in his small shaving glass.

"Well, if you ain't the damndest idiot!" he told himself severely. "How old do you think you are? Eighteen?"

He scowled at himself scornfully, but, try as he would, his attention wandered.

"Why, Loder's nothing but a crook! It's a damn shame! Lord! I wish——"

But he didn't say what he wished.

"She won't come back," he told himself savagely. "Of course, she won't come back."

Nevertheless, the next day he filled the little alcohol lamp to have it in readiness, he gave the top of the big table a spring cleaning, washed out the shaving mug, and changed his khaki shirt for one of silk. Then he spent a miserable afternoon, listening and waiting. At eight o'clock he banged the door of the shack; and down the whole length of the little, hilly road, on his way to Ma Bascombe's for supper, he reviled himself with appropriate epithets.

"Who are up at the Clem Turners this year?" he asked his landlady casually. This was two days later at dinner.

"Twarn't nobody there all summer," Ma Bascombe told him. "But now, come fall, they got some New York folks, a Mis' Summers and her niece. You probably seen the aunt. She drives down past here every afternoon on her way to the post office at mail time. There's a husband, too; but he only comes up Fridays or Saturdays."

"Nice people?" the man insinuated.

"I suppose they're all right," Ma Bascombe declared virtuously. "But I will say from what Eliza Turner tells me about Mis' Summers, I don't wonder that poor man looks worried when he comes up at the end of the week."

Ma Bascombe's boarder said nothing; and, after a pause, he had his reward.

"You know she's one of them vain, used-to-be-pretty kind of city women that expects to be waited on hand and foot. So what does she do but ask Eliza if she won't massage her. Come to find out what she wanted Eliza to do was to rub her. But Eliza says no, she had

enough to do without rubbin' her boarders."

"Whoop!" shouted Ma Bascombe's boarder.

"I don't wonder you laugh, Mr. Anthony. And a couple o' days ago a young man come out to see them. Leastways, I suppose he's young, but he don't look like it. But you got to 'scuse me. I can't tell these city folks worth a cent. Now, when any one looks at me, they know just how old I am, neither more nor less. Don't they, now, Mr. Anthony?"

Her boarder had to confess the truth of Ma Bascombe's statement. She looked just what she was in years and disposition—a kindly, middle-aged woman of sound sense and country wit, who had always worked hard and had always had good health.

"But with you city folks, I tell you it's different. Now, how old be you, Mr. Anthony? I always have wanted to know."

"I? I'm thirty-four."

"Land sakes! Thirty-four! Well, now, if that don't just prove it! I didn't allow you was a day over twenty-five!"

"Didn't you, Mrs. Bascombe?"

"No, I really didn't. Your head ain't the least mite bald. You're just as spry about climbin' and trampin' as a boy o' fifteen, and you laugh like a regular kid."

The man threw back his head and illustrated her last statement at once.

"There! Didn't I tell you so? But take that fella o' Mis' Summers', though. He dresses like he's twenty; but he's got a bay window that's forty-five, and the meal sacks around his eyes are pretty nigh fifty. I guess he's lived pretty hard. Well, as I was sayin' before he come, Mis' Summers wanted Eliza to make a cake. Eliza's a great hand at cake, you know. So Mis' Summers handed her a receipt for a Devil Cake that called for—how many eggs, do you think?"

"Three?" hazarded the man.

"Three! It called for fourteen eggs, and eggs at forty-five cents!"

Mrs. Bascombe surveyed her boarder

so threateningly that he felt compelled to ask:

"Do you mean *apiece*?"

"*Apiece* nuthin'! You know very well, young man, what I mean, and 'tain't funny to purtend you don't!"

With a gesture of humble apology, the young man effaced himself, and Mrs. Bascombe finished her story.

"What o' that?" says Mis' Summers to Eliza. "Just this," says Eliza. "I can't afford to use fourteen eggs in a cake when eggs is forty-five cents." "Charge me extra for 'em," says Mis' Summers, without thinkin' twice. So I say to you when a woman uses eggs like that when eggs is forty-five cents, it don't surprise me in the least to find her husband lookin' worried."

"The niece," the man asked, "is she like the aunt?"

"No. Eliza says she's a nice little thing. But there's something queer about her. She's supposed to be engaged to that new man."

"Engaged?"

"Well, Eliza says that the man and the aunt let on like she is, but the girl won't have it so. She always calls the man Mr., and she don't like to be left alone with him. Every afternoon while he's readin' the papers that's come up on the morning stage, she slips off to the woods. Ain't you never seen her? She passed by here a couple o' days ago with a white duck skirt that looked like it had been pulled through bogs and briers. I presume she thought we wouldn't notice it just because we're country folks. But let me tell you one thing; everybody on the pike seen her. Eliza told me afterward that skirt was clean that very afternoon. But you can't blame the girl when she sees such extravagance all around her. Can you, now, Mr. Anthony?"

"I should say not!" Mr. Anthony declared, with such earnestness that Mrs. Bascombe looked at him astonished.

"Poor little Goldylocks!" he kept repeating to himself as he climbed the hilly road back to the shack. "If Loder weren't such a crook!" Suddenly he stooped, picked up a stone, and threw it

as hard as he could. "Don't care if I am a fool!" he told himself defiantly. "I'll be a fool this time. If she won't come to me, I'll go to her! And properly introduced, too, by cracky!"

He put in the heart of the afternoon prowling restlessly about, and promptly at mail time was at the post office. In a few moments, the Clem Turner buggy drew up. Loder was driving, and beside him was a lady who, from Ma Bascombe's description, must be Aunt Adeline. He could well understand why, to a simple, healthy country woman, Aunt Adeline's appearance should seem strange, and even unpleasing. Her youth was long passed; but she was still clutching at it with such eager fingers that she had missed entirely the comeliness of middle age. Art had gilded her light hair a beautiful gold; but Art's triumph here only emphasized the shriveled sallowness of skin from which the rose leaf had forever faded, the lost brightness of eyes determined still to be bright, and the scrawny wrinkles that a collar, ears high, failed to conceal. She looked, too, as though the general peevishness of her expression might be due, in some part, at least, to ill health.

With recognition in his glance, Anthony stepped briskly over to the buggy. In town, Loder was not only pleased, but anxious to remind Anthony of their acquaintance. Given the chance, he would, no doubt, be even more friendly in the country. He was.

"Why, Cleeves, old boy!" he exclaimed, stretching out a cordial hand. "This is a surprise! However did you get snowed up here? Come over and let me present you to Mrs. Summers. Adeline, this is my friend, Mr. Cleeves—Anthony Cleeves, the writer, you know."

Mrs. Summers looked at him with the quick interest of the city woman who has found the country wearisome and dull. She smiled him an effusive welcome, and put out her hand. Then, as he looked at her, a change came over her face. Her smile died. Her eyes turned away. Her hand, which was in his, lost its feel of life. She murmured a perfunctory:



Anthony Cleeves started for him, anger in his face and strength in his clenched fist.

"How d'y'e do."

Anthony Cleeves lost his tongue for one awkward second. Then he said to Loder:

"I'm the one to be surprised to find you. How can the market get on without you? Are you staying here?"

"Yes. I'm spending a couple of weeks with Mrs. Summers."

"Do you live here, Mrs. Summers?"

"Oh, no," that lady murmured.

Loder answered more fully for her:

"Mrs. Summers and her niece—that is to say, Mrs. Summers' family are boarding for a few weeks at the Turners'—second white house on the right, a mile and a half or two miles up the pike."

"I'm a fixture here," Anthony Cleeves explained genially. "I have a little shack up on the hillside where I bury myself weeks at a time. I live up there alone; but I come down once or twice

a day to good Mrs. Bascombe, who feeds me."

He paused a moment to give Mrs. Summers a chance to invite his further acquaintance; but Mrs. Summers sat silent.

"It isn't a very hard climb up to the shack," he continued. "You better try it some afternoon, Loder, and bring Mrs. Summers with you. Take the first road down there to the left. Up a little distance you come to a stone fence. Just beyond the stone fence is a path that leads into the woods. That's my path."

He turned his most charming manner full upon Mrs. Summers.

"My tea service is rather primitive, but the woods are fine, and I have one good view."

But Mrs. Summers continued to gaze absent-mindedly up the road.

"Will you please see if there are any letters, Mr. Loder?" she drawled.

The awkwardness of the situation showed only in the red which was creeping up Loder's neck.

As Loder went into the post office, neither of the others spoke. When silence had done its worst, Anthony Cleeves remarked, in his most society tone:

"Pleasant day, isn't it?"

"Yes, isn't it?" murmured the lady.

Loder came out, and stepped into the buggy. He waited a moment with reins lifted, looking inquiringly into Mrs. Summers' face. Finally he blurted out:

"Don't you think it would be pleasant, Adeline, to have Mr. Cleeves drop in and see us?"

"Really, Mr. Loder, we're living so quietly that I don't believe Mr. Cleeves would find us at all entertaining. Good day, Mr. Cleeves."

Loder's jaw dropped in amazement. Mechanically, though, he touched the mare, and they were off.

"W-wow!"

That was the first thing that Anthony Cleeves, left to himself, had to say. Then he laughed. And he continued to laugh as a man should whose efforts for a good many years had been, not to get invitations, but to decide what ones to accept. That he, Anthony Cleeves, should court an invitation from a used-to-be-pretty woman and a low-class broker, and then be coolly turned down was, indeed, subject for merriment. All the way up the stony little hill road he chuckled, thinking what a good story it would be to tell on himself. Then, as he struck into the woods, his mood changed. He remembered Goldylocks, poor little Goldylocks doomed to pass her days with those two; and forthwith he was ready to choke all used-to-be-pretty women from Maine to California, and all bucket-shop men from the Gulf to the Great Lakes.

He would have liked to choke them every time he woke during the night, and to put in the next morning doing the same had not another task been urgent. It was. So, putting aside his grievance, he forced his mind to words and sentences, and, by strong will power, turned himself into an efficient machine.

He worked steadily all morning until William, the hired man, came up and dragged him away; and after dinner he did some more, till finally the last word of revision was thought out and typed.

Then, as though to reward him for his industry, the unexpected happened. There was a knock on the screen door, and a voice—a small, rather frightened, childish voice—quavered out:

"Please, Little Bear, I—I'm lost again."

"Goldylocks!"

He rushed toward her, in the first moment ready to take her, and keep her, and never let her go. Then, as he was opening the screen door, he caught himself, and paused one quick instant in amazement at his own feelings. The instant passed, and he stammered out the commonplace greeting:

"I'm so glad to see you."

"I didn't get lost the same way this time, really I didn't," the girl explained eagerly. "That would have been too bold, wouldn't it? No. I came up along our north pasture, and then I climbed the ridge and struck across."

"Goldylocks! That was the hardest trail you could have taken!"

"I know it. And I'm very hungry, Little Bear."

"Good! Here are the tea things all waiting. And will you notice how well I've washed the shaving mug? I've washed it every day since you were here."

He lit the alcohol lamp, and then gazed long and happily at the girl. It seemed to him now, as he took time to study her, that there was a worried, frightened look in her eyes. She was pale, too, and languid.

"Goldylocks, girl, you shouldn't have come that long way. You're all worn out."

"But, Little Bear, how could I get lost again the same way? What would you think of me?"

"If you knew how I've been longing to see you again, you wouldn't ask me that, Goldylocks."

"Have you, really?"

"Yes, really and truly. I don't think I've ever longed for any one so much."

"Then why, Little Bear"—the girl's voice was low now, and her cheeks were flushed—"why didn't you come to me? It's so easy for a man to come, so hard for a girl. And I've been so lonely and miserable. Yesterday I thought I could stand it no longer. Oh, I can't tell you how I wanted some one that I could like, and that would be kind to me, and understand me as granny used to understand me, and not think me only obstinate and foolish. Then I thought of Little Bear, and I wished and wished that you would come. I was sitting in the Kessler woods under the chestnut trees, and I said to myself: 'If I wish hard enough, he'll hear me and come.' And when you didn't come, I said to myself: 'Perhaps he can't come this afternoon, but he'll come to-night. He'll come right in to Aunt Adeline, and tell her who he is, and that he's my friend.' But you didn't come, and I had to sing to Mr. Loder, and talk to Mr. Loder, and sit beside Mr. Loder."

"But Goldylocks," the man cried, "I tried to yesterday! Really I did!"

And thereupon he gave the account of how he had arranged to meet Aunt Adeline in hopes of being invited to call on her. He told the story as he had planned to tell it on the little hill road coming back, with such whimsical characterizations of Loder and Aunt Adeline, and such humorous appreciation of his own dismay, that long before he was finished the girl was in gales of laughter.

"Oh," she gasped, "how I wish I had been there—behind the post-office door!"

"Idle regrets," the man insisted. "The story has lost nothing in the telling, I assure you."

"You understand, of course, Aunt Adeline's reason, Little Bear?"

"I'll be shot if I do."

"Why, don't you see? Mr. Loder's to have a clear coast. If I don't marry him next week I never will. Aunt Adeline's simply set on my taking him, so she's brought me up here where I can't even see any one else. She seems to have the idea that if I'm with him so many hours a day, pretty soon I'll get to like him. Now, if you were some impossible old

fossil, I don't think she'd mind you in the least. As it is, you—well, you're too presentable."

"You don't say so!" cried the man, delighted. "Aunt Adeline isn't such a pill, after all, is she?"

"But maybe, now, Little Bear, if I were to tell her that you're perfectly safe——"

"Safe?" repeated the man indignantly.

"Wedded to your art, don't you know."

"O-oh!"

"A sort of granny person."

"A *what*?"

"A sort of granny person—kind, and gentle, and jolly like granny, and sweet and patient with me. If I told Aunt Adeline these things, maybe she'd let you come, after all."

"Goldylocks," the man said firmly, "I don't think we'll tell Aunt Adeline these things. She will just have to find them out for herself."

"Then I suppose I won't see you any more," the girl said, with a little sigh. "And I like your tea, and I just love your shack, and I have such a good time whenever I'm with you."

"Goldylocks, listen here: There is no reason why we shouldn't see each other whenever we like. Are we children or responsible grown-ups? I've done my best to become friends with Aunt Adeline, and she would none of me. Yet she has nothing against me, and could have nothing except that I'm not rich. Yet, by the Lord Harry, I'm not as poor as Loder'll be some of these days when he gets cleaned out, and I'm not a crook."

"Don't rail at Mr. Loder. Aunt Adeline dotes on him. He made her a lot of money once."

"And I suppose she's trying to make some return now?"

"Yes," said the girl quietly, "I suppose she is."

"You suppose she is, and yet you can sit calmly by and raise no outcry?"

"Little Bear, I'm sorry for Aunt Adeline. She's one of those women to whom the only thing on earth that

counts is money. She doesn't have to have a great deal of it; but, when she hasn't more than enough for the bare necessities, she's pitifully miserable."

"Well, what has that got to do with you?"

"A good deal. On account of granny's queer will, you know. Aunt Adeline is my guardian until I'm twenty-two. If I marry within that

time with her consent, she's to be given some money—enough to mean something to her. If I marry within that time without her consent, she's not to get anything, nor am I. The whole fortune goes to the Brooklyn Hospital for Cats and Dogs."

"To the *what*?"

"The Brooklyn Hospital for Cats and Dogs."

"Why Brooklyn? Did granny like Brooklyn?"

"No. She hated it! We went over there once, hunting an apartment. We thought it would be nice to get away a little distance from New York. We were there all day. It's a terrible place."

"That's what I've heard," said the man. "Well, did she like cats?"

"No, Little Bear. That's the funny part of it. She just hated them, too!"

"H'm! Do you—do you think that when she made her will, granny was a little—a little—"

"No, no! I'm sure she wasn't. That's what Aunt Adeline says; but if you had known granny you wouldn't think so."

"Has Aunt Adeline any thoughts of breaking the will?"

"Aunt Adeline? No. She couldn't break it, for she has no legal right to a cent. She's my father's sister, you know, and the money comes all from the other side, from granny's brother, old Uncle John."

"Then Aunt Adeline's whole anxiety is about her own fee, as it were?"

The girl nodded.

"If that's so, it seems to me it doesn't

much matter whom you marry, just so you do it at once. Aunt Adeline would have to consent to save herself."

"No, I don't think she would. Her one and only choice is Mr. Loder. She's given him her promise, I'm sure."

"All the more fool she!"

"I'm sorry for Aunt Adeline," the girl said again; "but I don't think I'm sorry enough to take Mr. Loder."

"I should hope not!" the man exclaimed.

"If I could only hand her her fee and be done. It would mean so much to her! It might make her let

up a little on poor Uncle Robert, too. He lost some money of hers once when he was a young man, and I don't believe she's ever allowed a day to pass since without reminding him."

"Even so, it isn't up to you to rescue poor Uncle Robert by sacrificing yourself," the man insisted severely. "But to go back to the will. What's to happen if you don't marry at all before you're twenty-two?"

"There are two more provisions: If I remain single, the estate is to be held



The girl, hiding her face against the rough slab sides of the shack, sobbed miserably.

for me in trust until I'm thirty-five. If I marry, there's another sealed will which nobody but Mr. Simms knows anything about. Aunt Adeline is sure it's Cat Hospital, or something like that; but I don't believe so. Granny had lots of sense, and time and again we went over the subject of charities—sensible charities, I mean—and I knew exactly what she wanted to do."

"It doesn't seem to me," the man said finally, "that the question of your marrying Loder or not marrying him has anything to do with granny's will. If Loder were the only man on earth you wanted to marry, I hope you'd have character enough to take him even if it lost you every cent of old Uncle John's money. But he isn't that man. He's one of the men you don't want to have anything to do with. He's in a crooked business, and he's a crook, and, furthermore, he's nothing but a coarse, vulgar fellow. I don't think you'll ever marry him; but you oughtn't to let your mind dally for an instant even with the thought of such a thing."

"I'm not thinking of him, truly I'm not; but I can't forget what a disappointment it will be to Aunt Adeline if she doesn't get that money."

"Goldylocks, I think you've expended enough sympathy on Aunt Adeline."

In its earnestness, the middle-sized chair had edged its way over to the little, squat chair, the shaving mug was trying its best to get within whispering distance of the teacup, and everybody present was so engrossed in each other that nobody saw or heard the oldish young man who was coming up the path from the hilly road.

"H'm!" he said to the backs of the middle-sized chair and the little, squat chair. "H'm-m-m-m! Hope I'm not intruding?"

The middle-sized chair jumped so violently that its occupant was thrown all the way to his feet. He turned a startled face to the newcomer.

"Why—why, Loder! I didn't hear you come up! How are you? Won't you sit down?"

"H'm!" remarked Loder. "I thought I'd look you up. I didn't know how

steep that stony road was. Yes, thanks, I would like to sit down. I'm all winded."

He started forward, then stopped as the girl in the little, squat chair rose and faced him. His lips parted in surprise and dismay, and a wave of turkey red crept up his fat neck, encrimsoned his very scalp, and stung his eyes until they swam in tears.

"You here! Well, I'll be damned!"

"Very likely," remarked the other man coolly. "But not, I ask you, in the presence of a lady."

"Lady? What lady? How do I know she's a lady? After this you got to show me!"

The other took a step forward, menace in eye and in hand.

"Another word, Loder——"

"Look out, Cleeves! Don't you try to stop me! I got a right to talk! I'm supposed to be engaged to that girl, and I'll be damned if I stand for her coming up here alone to visit a man, and a man that no longer ago than last night she told me she didn't even know!"

Anthony Cleeves started for him, anger in his face and strength in his clenched fist. But the girl stopped him.

"Wait," she said. "Mr. Loder, I'm not engaged to you, and never have been. When you say I am, you say what is untrue."

"You're not, eh? You jolly well bet you're not! I wouldn't have you now if your fortune were in millions instead of thousands! But why," he demanded, with all the outraged feeling of a thief who has been robbed, "why weren't you on the square with me? Why did you tell me you didn't even know him?"

"Know whom?" the girl asked, bewildered.

"Him! Didn't I ask you last night: 'Have you ever met a fellow named Anthony Cleves?' And didn't you say, without a blink: 'No, I don't believe I've ever known any one named Cleeves?'"

The girl looked questioningly at the other man, who nodded assent. Then her head sank in embarrassment and shame.

"Mr. Loder," she gasped, "believe me, I didn't know you meant this—this gentleman."

"You didn't, eh? Who did you suppose I meant? Mr. John Smith? Aw, you turn me sick, you do—the whole bunch of you! I see it now. You're all in together, that precious aunt included. My, but you've done it cleverly: the girl has held back, maiden modesty, and so forth; the aunt kept urging as per contract, signed, sealed, and delivered; and all the while the other man hid up here in the woods! And yesterday at post office, aunt and the other man had never even met. Aunt wouldn't invite him to call—no, not for anything! We mustn't take the least risk on my chances—*mine!*"

The expression on his heavy face changed. His lower jaw shot out in bulldog anger.

"Yes, you're all mighty clever," he sneered; "but I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Anthony Cleaves, and you, too, little girl: No one has ever yet made a monkey of Jim Loder that they haven't been sorry for it. Just wait! I'll get you yet! I'll get every one of you!"

"Loder," the other man said quietly, "you've had your say, now listen a moment to me. You feel you've been ill-treated, and perhaps you have been in so far as this girl didn't absolutely refuse to see you when she intended never to marry you. For the rest, all this plot to make you ridiculous is mere tommyrot. Mrs. Summers and I never exchanged a word until yesterday. She is your friend, or, at any rate, she isn't mine, and you can have no reason to suppose that she hasn't lived up to the spirit as well as the letter of whatever contract she made with you. This is the simple truth, which I think you ought to have the chance to know."

"Ha, ha! Keeping it up to the very end, eh? If you'd ever played the market, perhaps you'd know when you were beaten."

"I think, Loder, it's time for you to go."

The turkey red poured back, the lower jaw shot out. Then Loder wavered.

The other man was rather well built, and his muscles looked clean and firm.

"Go?" sneered Loder. "Why, you couldn't pay me to stay! I can't go quick enough! I feel like I was interrupting an—" A vile word was in his mind and in his eye; but he hadn't the courage to utter it.

He went panting down the little path, turning once to shake his fist, and shout back:

"You mark my words!"

They watched him until he was out of sight. Then the man spoke:

"That comes of mixing up with crooks and cads."

The girl, hiding her face against the rough slab sides of the shack, sobbed miserably.

"Oh," she moaned, "I feel humiliated beyond words! Will I ever forget the awful things he said? And some of them I—I deserve! I should have been firmer with Aunt Adeline. I see it now. I have used him badly. I wasn't thinking of him at all. I was thinking only of Aunt Adeline and myself—of my own comfort and of anything that would make my life with Aunt Adeline a little easier. He is right. He has been badly used, and I am to blame. And I shouldn't have come back here. Oh, I know I shouldn't, and I knew it while I was coming! Oh, dear, oh, dear, how stupid and foolish I've been!"

So she wept out her humiliation and shame.

The man watched her gravely, and, as he watched, a thought slowly grew in his mind until it showed in his face in a new expression of tenderness and determination.

"Poor little Goldylocks!" he said, touching her shoulders gently.

The girl shrank from his fingers with a little gasp.

"Oh, please," she begged, "haven't I enough to regret?"

She faced him with eyes and mouth aquiver with immemorial grief; that Celtic grief which sees no happiness in any future however distant.

"I must go," she said. "Good-by."

"Yes," the man said quietly. "Let us go. The short way down, back of

the shack; the way you came the first day. That will get us to Aunt Adeline an hour or more before Loder."

"Us? Are you coming? Why?"

"To tell Aunt Adeline what has happened, and to make her understand once for all that you can't marry Loder because you're going to marry me."

"Marry you?" The girl looked at him blankly with the parted lips of an astonished child. "Why, Little Bear, do you want me?"

"Want you, Goldylocks? I want you more than I have ever wanted anything on earth, and if you don't want me, I don't know how I shall be brave enough to go on alone."

"And you're not only just—just sorry for me?"

"Goldylocks, look at me."

She looked into his eyes, and what she saw there brought a sudden flame to her cheeks and a new light to her own eyes.

"Why," she quavered uncertainly, "Little Bear, I believe I can be happy again, and I thought I never could."

"Goldylocks!"

He held her close, kissing the ancient grief from eyes and mouth.

"Come," he whispered at last. "We must hurry."

So they started off, holding each other's hands like children, with nothing more to say at first. Then the girl's steps lagged.

"Little Bear," she said, "we are going too fast. You haven't thought it all out. What—what about your work and the lean months when you wouldn't like to have a wife? You know what you said; and, oh, Little Bear, I'd rather stop now than take the risks of any bitter regrets in the future."

"I have thought it out," the man declared, with conviction. "Without knowing it, I have been thinking it out ever since the first time I saw you. Who am I that I shouldn't meet life as another man meets it? Why should I not take the joy it has to offer me, and why should I seek to shirk its responsibilities? I think I used to be afraid of life, Goldylocks, but I'm not now. And as for the lean months, dear, we

shall face them together. Why, do you know," he said, with a little laugh, "life seems to me much simpler than it used to."

"But, Little Bear, I—I don't want to be a drag. Perhaps granny's new will has—"

"No, Goldylocks, we won't bank on that for one cent. We'll get married at once."

The girl stood still.

"No," she said firmly, "we won't. Not until after my birthday at earliest. Who knows what's in granny's new will? Anyway, there's nothing to be lost by waiting, and perhaps that's the very thing granny's been expecting me to do all along."

"Very well," said the man. "If you feel that way, so be it. But your birthday's terribly far off."

"A whole week," the girl said soberly.

Then they laughed together at their own seriousness.

During the quick climb down, the man was gravely tender, the girl one changing succession of April tears and April smiles.

"Little Bear," she whispered once, "I won't be much expense, truly I won't. You don't know what a wonderful cook I am! I never waste a scrap. I learned the way the French do from a dear little Frenchwoman at Moret."

"That's good," he told her. "I've got an awful appetite."

A little later she murmured:

"And I'll be an enormous saving in hats; truly I will. Why, I'll save you two hundred a year easily."

"Fine!" the man said. "We'll buy an auto."

When they reached the pasture, he went over with her the immediate campaign.

"We must be firm with Aunt Adeline, and not falsely tender any longer of her feelings."

"Yes, Little Bear, I see that now."

"I'll make our announcement, and you corroborate what I say. We'll state the matter clearly; but we won't argue it with her. Then we'll tell her as clearly as we can about Loder."

"She's afraid of Mr. Loder. I do

wish he'd be so furious with us all that he'd go at once."

"I think he will. I think he'll get a buggy at the store, and drive over to Catesby to catch the night train. How could he stay?"

"If we tell her all the dreadful things he said, she'll be afraid to meet him."

"Why should she meet him? He wouldn't listen to her, anyway. He'd only abuse her. You might advise her to have a sick headache and be in retirement before he arrives."

The girl laughed.

"Little Bear, you know Aunt Adeline already. She always has a sick headache rather than face anything disagreeable."

As they approached the house, they caught a glimpse of her in the hammock under the pines.

"You're not afraid, are you, Goldylocks?"

"No," whispered the girl, "I'm not afraid. I don't think I'll ever be afraid again. But—but stay beside me, Little Bear."

They were married at the parsonage the day after the girl was twenty-two. Aunt Adeline, who had taken to bed the afternoon of the announcement, and had been there ever since, got up for the wedding.

"There must be no scandal," she said to her niece, in tones which meant: "Of course, I'll do my best to hush the scandal."

Uncle Robert came out from town; and, when Aunt Adeline wasn't looking, kissed the bride affectionately and wrung the groom's hand with much feeling.

"I'm so happy about all this," he told them again and again. "I was afraid they might wear her out into consenting."

And Mrs. Turner was there as the bride's friend, and Mrs. Bascombe as the groom's. It was Mrs. Bascombe who had the pleasure of spreading a little bridal tea afterward, for Aunt Adeline felt unequal to festivities.

"Just let him keep that little shack in the woods," Mrs. Bascombe advised the

bride in a motherly aside, "and then, when the devil of scratching takes hold on him, he can rush off there, and you won't be worried in the least. And when you come up next summer, you come right down here with me and mind your own business, and Mr. Anthony will love you all the more for it."

"Ma Bascombe's a dear," the bride said, as they tramped up the little hill road.

The young people had decided to stay on a few days in the shack before returning to town.

"She is a good soul," the groom declared heartily. "I'm glad you like her, for we'll want to board with her whenever the city gets too much for us."

Midway up the hill they stopped, and sat down on a log to read, in the fading light, a letter which the afternoon stage had brought for the bride. It was from old Mr. Simms, her trustee and lawyer.

I am very sorry, my dear young lady, that I cannot come in person and attend your wedding. Accept my felicitations, and believe me when I tell you that your marriage to this gentleman pleases me much. I have made what inquiries I can, and from what I have been able to learn I take it that Mr. Cleeves is a gentleman of honor and a man of good standing in his profession.

As soon as you and your aunt are in town, let me know, and I shall arrange a time for reading your grandmother's sealed will. In the meantime, I inclose a letter from your grandmother which I was to hand you on this occasion. Let me say I did not in the least approve your grandmother's various arrangements. The chances for miscarriage seemed to me too great. However, all has ended well, as she hoped and believed it would.

With best wishes, my dear young lady, for health and happiness to you and your husband, I am, your obedient servant,

ISAAC SIMMS.

The girl took the inclosed letter with eager fingers, and pressed it to her cheek.

"If you only knew, Little Bear, how granny hated to write letters, you'd realize what this means to me. We won't open it until we get home."

It was dark when they reached the end of the little path.

"Dear shack!" the girl said, patting the rough posts of the veranda. "How



The fire slowly crumbled, and fell, and still they sat gazing into its glowing depths.

I love you! And I've only seen you twice. No wonder Aunt Adeline thinks it's awful!"

Mrs. Bascombe had been there before them, and the shack inside wore a strained, almost sanctimonious look of cleanliness and order. The fire was laid in the bowlder fireplace, the woodbox was full, the floor sent up the pungent smell of soap and water, and the big table, stripped of its vast disarray of papers and books, looked no more like its usual self than the plucked turkey looks like the strutting gobbler.

"Ha!" chuckled the man. "Ma Bascombe is going to start us out right, at any rate. It will take us two days to make this place habitable. It looks for all the world like ma's own parlor where the minister sits when he comes to call."

"Let's not use the lamp to-night," the girl said. "Let us light the fire. It's

a wee bit chilly, and a wood fire is such a friendly companion."

So they lit the fire, and then drew in from the veranda the middle-sized chair and the little, squat chair, which fitted right into the elbow of the middle-sized chair in the most surprising manner. One would never have supposed that once they had both formed part of a solitary bachelor's establishment.

"Isn't this good?" murmured the man at last. "Do you know, sweetheart, it's better than anything I've ever imagined."

He threw on a fresh fagot, and by its light they read granny's letter together. They had to read it together, for the girl's voice was too uncertain to go on alone. Here is what

granny wrote:

MY OWN DEAR GOLDYLOCKS: Mr. Simms tells me there is little likelihood of his ever giving you this letter. He tells me that I'm running too great risks, but, dearie, I don't see any other way of doing just what I want to do. You know what I think of Adeline Summers, for I've often told you. Nevertheless, I want you to be with her for a few years, for she can teach you much which I have been unable to teach you. For one thing, she will make you understand the value of money and, unbeknownst to herself, the folly of it. She will pick you out a husband of her own kind whom you must be strong enough to withstand, even when she weeps and tears her hair at your refusal. It will be hard for you to do anything that will take from her the money she longs for so passionately. But you must be true to yourself, and I know that you will be finally. And you have too good sense to send all of poor John's money to those hideous Brooklyn cats! Mr. Simms shakes his head, but don't I know my Goldylocks?

And this brings me to the moment when you read this letter safely married to the

man whom you have judged and decided for yourself. Oh, dearie, how I would that I could be with you! Very soon now you will hear the new will, which is not a new will at all, but the one you and I worked out together long ago. You know why so much is placed in other hands more capable than ours, we thought of dispensing charity and carrying on good works. Yet enough remains, and more than enough. And you'll see I've given Adeline the sum that's been dangling before her eyes these years, and that she's weeping now as lost. May it bring her the only joy she seems capable of feeling!

And this brings me again to you, dearie, and the man you've married. How I wish I could see him and talk to him, for I'd love to tell him about my Goldylocks who is his Goldylocks now. Oh, my dear, when you were little, and I told you the Goldylocks story, do you remember how you used to cry out at the end, and stamp your foot, and say: "But why did she run away? Why didn't she stop and play with Little Bear? I'd stop and play with Little Bear! He was a nice Little Bear!"

The girl, who was reading, gave a cry of wonder, and joy, and grief, and gazed up at the man through streaming eyes. He was breathing hard, and his eyes, too, glistened in the firelight.

And I'm hoping, dearie, that in the man you've married you've found the Little Bear that you wanted so much to play with, and my wish is that you and he play the game of life together bravely and merrily. Yes, my

dear, merrily, for that's just as important as bravely. And as I've called you the dear, foolish, little name of Goldylocks all these years when no one has been near to laugh and misunderstand, I'm going to call this husband of yours whose name I shall never know, I'm going to call him Little Bear. He'll understand, won't he? He must understand if he's your husband!

"Oh!" cried the reading girl again. "How did she know? How did she know?"

And you'll tell him about me, won't you, dearie, and sometimes talk about me, for I have loved you so much, and will be loving you still if it is true that love is stronger even than—death.

Good-by, good-by, my two dear children, and feel if you can that I'm with you as you read, longing to take you in my arms and tell you again how much I love you.

GRANNY.

The fire slowly crumbled, and fell, and still they sat gazing into its glowing depths. A wind stirred among the leaves outside, then stole gently in, rustling a stray paper, and blowing for an instant the ashes of the dying fire.

The girl shivered slightly, and pressed her head closer to the man's cheek.

"I—I think she's here with us, don't you?" she whispered.

"I don't know," the man said. "I hope so. Dear granny!"



The Road

THERE is a sinuous road of fragrant loam;
 'Twixt blossoms blue and gold a ribbon brown;
 It winds from home down to the tawdry town
 Of painted palace and illumined dome.
 And oh, the wild desire it woke to roam!
 Far off the envied Fame—far off the Crown!
 Ah, many an errant light that led me down,
 And many a voice behind that called me home!

From robin-haunted cot and garden sweet
 To struggle and inscrutable emprise;
 From dear associations and old ties
 To solitude amid a crowded street;
 The sorry step I took—I thought to-day
 I heard the robins sing the same old way.

WILLIAM F. MCCORMACK.

The Commencement Program



By ANNE O'HAGAN

Author of "Marcia," "In Worlds Not Realized," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

It was May, and the back yards commanded by the window of Mrs.

Leslie's sewing room gave various intimations of the calendrical fact, according to the dispositions of their owners. In some the steady thump of beating apparatus upon rugs and carpets gave notice of old-fashioned spring housekeeping, with plenty of hard labor and no newfangled nonsense of vacuum cleaners about it; in others, shirt-sleeved men, with comfortable pipes in their mouths, appeared at any time between half past four and sunset, and busied themselves with digging up the earth plots, intersected and bounded by little concrete paths, the familiar vision of the householder with garden aspirations. In two, gnarled, old lilac bushes put forth great plumes of feathery purple, and defied the dusty city with sweetness.

Miss Bartram, temporarily dressmaker by the day to Mrs. Leslie, turned a lackluster eye upon all the punctual miracles of the spring observable from the room where she sat, busy with Mrs. Leslie's summer outfit.

"I don't really like her, Dan," Mrs. Leslie confided to her husband. "She sews beautifully, and she has a real gift of style, but there's something about her—I don't know what. I wish old Mrs. Rickey had chosen another time to have her attack of appendicitis than the month when she was engaged to come and make me ready for the summer. This Miss Bartram is really a lot better dressmaker, but—oh, I don't know.

I just can't feel warm toward her. She's sort of—not exactly sullen—"

"I thought you hired her for a dressmaker, not an entertainer," suggested Dan.

"She's handsome, though," pursued Mrs. Leslie, deaf to marital sarcasm. "Have you happened to see her?"

"Haven't noticed her," grunted Dan, from his evening paper. And Mrs. Leslie subsided.

Miss Bartram was handsome—decidedly. There were a few ineradicable freckles across the bridge of her finely cut nose, but they only brought out the milky whiteness and the delicate texture of her skin. Her hair was a cloudy red, magnificently massed, wavy, superb. Mrs. Leslie used to look at it enviously, and regarded with more distaste than ever the set of brown puffs and braids which niggardly nature and the prevailing styles in coiffures had forced upon her.

"It is such a waste!" sighed Mrs. Leslie, struggling obscurely with the idea that a woman with an adoring husband, hosts of friends, a small but well-established social position, really had more need of, more right to, beautiful locks than a poor creature devoid of all these reasons for desiring beauty.

"Perhaps she has a beau!" she added hopefully in her thoughts.

The profusion of glorious, stormily, darkly red locks would not be such a spendthrift matter, then, in her simple philosophy. She tried to lead the conversation to the subject of beaus, as she

sat basting together widths of green organdies under Miss Bartram's directions. But that excellent dressmaker declined to follow where her employer led, conversationally, and even left Rose Leslie with the impression that she had somehow been snubbed. But that was, of course, palpably out of the

"It's really a pity," said Mrs. Leslie, still on the subject of Miss Bartram's paintable hair. "But perhaps your—your young man"—she struggled to achieve an air of playfulness, and to use the language of Miss Bartram's class—"would object. I know my husband—my young man"—she added democrati-



"I am sorry, Mrs. Leslie," she said, in her even voice, "but I have a bad headache. I must go home."

question. She would try a more direct attack.

"I should think artists would love to paint you," she remarked. "Your hair is such a wonderful, rare color."

"I don't know any artists," replied Miss Bartram coldly. "Put the bias edge next to the straight, if you please, Mrs. Leslie, not the two straights together."

cally, "won't let me sit to any artist, though we know ever so many who have asked me to pose for some little scrap in this picture or in that."

"If you will turn up the hem," responded Miss Bartram, "I think I can finish the skirt this afternoon."

"She's positively catty!" thought her employer. "Oh, well, it's always foolish to try to take an interest in any



Behind the closed door he talked to her.

one outside the class that one belongs to. The lower orders have no gratitude."

But, because she was congenitally incapable of long silences, she was soon prattling away again.

"The sisters' lilac bushes are lovely this year, aren't they?" she began. "And their plane tree. It's funny how much one cares for a bit of green in the crowded city when one doesn't seem to feel excited over acres of it in the country."

"The sisters?" said Miss Bartram inquiringly.

"Yes. Hadn't you noticed? The Sisters of St. Theresa have the house third from here—a big, double house it is. Such sweet-looking women—I meet them in the street sometimes. They visit the poor and sick, you know, and they have a school here. I must say that I think the religious headdress is

the most becoming a woman can wear. Don't you think so?"

"I don't believe I care for it," replied Miss Bartram. Her neck was bent over her work, her eyes were lowered upon it.

"The curve of her shoulder and throat is really exquisite," thought Rose Leslie. "But isn't she the bloodless creature! What a waste, all that beauty on a seamstress!"

The rest of the day Miss Bartram was even more sparing of speech than usual, and several times she looked out the sewing-room window toward the flowering lilacs and the burgeoning plane tree; but there was no pleasure in her level glance. And once, when she saw a lay sister come out into the yard, and begin to swash the concrete path between the freshly dug flower beds with water from a pail, her lips curled, and her brown eyes sparkled malevolently.

Then she went back to the green organdie, and stitched away at it, and into each she sewed a sullen resentment against life, she sewed embittered recollections. She was back in her remotest past—back even beyond the days in the great asylum yard, in the rectangular asylum building. She was a thin, long-legged, little girl, walking through the first freshness of a hot summer morning beside a baby carriage which her mother pushed.

It had been such a terrific summer, that one when she was only seven, and the baby was less than a year old! The doctor had said—of course!—that the tiny mite needed cool, fresh air—needed the country. And her poor, despairing mother had been wont to arise before the early sun broke in the east, and to wheel the baby in his carriage to the edge of the ugly, mill city, Lizzie trotting silent and oppressed by her side.

Even then, even when she was seven—oh, ages before she was seven!—she had known all that there was to know of grinding want, of forlorn hardship and poverty. She had known what made poverty and labor more desperate and more pitiful in her family than in the other poor, toiling families by which she was surrounded. Her father! That long-ago summer morning, as she had trudged by the side of the bent, discouraged, desperate woman, she had felt rise in her heart a hot, rebellious scorn for the weakness implanted in women—the weakness that made her mother take her father back, as often as he returned from his wanderings, which made her bend to his will, which made all her questions, and upbraidings, and recriminations so futile, so meaningless.

Well, the early morning walks to the edge of the town had not saved the baby. And grief and worry had finally done for her mother. Did her father ever come back again, she wondered, that time? He had gone away from home when the baby was two months old; he had said, in language which Lizzie had never forgotten, that he could not abide squalling brats! And the baby had been six months old when he closed his waxen, blue-veined lids per-

manently upon his old, old, wise, tired eyes.

A hot tear fell upon the green organdie—Lizzie had loved that baby as she had never before or since loved anything. And sixteen years after she had stood, dry-eyed, by the poor little coffin, she could cry for loneliness, and for the cruel waste of love in the world.

And then her mother had let the breath go out of her body in a sigh—the poor, futile mother! And the neighbors had taken a sort of care of Lizzie for a while, but they did not love her, and they could not keep her forever. They said she was a strange, sullen child. Why wouldn't she be?

Lizzie asked the universe the question this afternoon in Mrs. Leslie's sewing room. Why wouldn't she be a strange, sullen child, living in a world so unjust, so harsh, so foolish, as the one in which she was left alone?

And then had come the asylum. Did her father ever go back to Regan's Court, she wondered? And did the neighbors tell him how she had been committed to St. Rose of Lima's Orphanage? She had been wont to hope, wildly, heartbreakingly, for his coming, in the early days there. He would come—careless, cruelly indifferent as he was—he would come and rescue her from this awful world of rule and order, this world of classes, of masses, of vespers, of catechism; this world of appointed tasks and horrid, neat uniforms, of meals insidiously nourishing, maddeningly regular.

Lizzie recalled to this very day how she had rebelled at the tyranny which deprived her of the beverage she had been wont to share with her mother—tea as black as ink, as strong as lye, from a brown pot always on the back of the kitchen stove. She remembered how she had longed for the banquets which she and her mother had had together in times of comparative plenty—the pig's feet, the appetizing spareribs. At St. Rose of Lima's pork was not considered appropriate food for little girls, and another argument was thereby added to Lizzie's arraignment of the universe of cruelty and oppression.

How she had hated it all—the daily lessons, the daily tasks, the hourly inculcation of habits of neatness, of thoroughness! She had tried to run away from it all once; to run to her father, who never came for her. And she had been caught and severely punished; they were stern disciplinarians at St. Rose of Lima's.

Oh, how she had hated them, with their commands and their teachings! How especially she had hated Sister Mary Agatha, who had been delegated to tell her that everything which happened was all for the best, since it was all the will of God; that it was all for the best that the baby should die, that her mother should die, that she should suffer. Because, forsooth, it was the will of God.

"I hate God!" Lizzie had stubbornly informed Sister Mary Agatha, and oh, how she had been punished for that piece of impiety!

Well, she had gone out when she was seventeen, equipped with a trade—they did not send girls weaponless into the world from St. Rose's. And she still hated God, she said, as she sat sewing feverishly on the lengths of organdie, and she still hated the cruelty and the rapaciousness of the world. Oh, she knew all about it now! She knew things that her poor, heartbroken mother had not dreamed—she knew the curse of unprotected beauty, she knew the humiliating pursuit of satyrlike men. What was there in her, she wondered, that had so long kept her "straight," as the girls in Madame Cérise's had called it? She despised everything alike—that was the secret, she told herself; she despised the milk-and-water thing that sufficed this little doll, her present employer, for love; she despised the stalking horror that had masqueraded under that name for the girls at Madame Cérise's. She had been discharged from Madame Cérise's for despising too openly what the manager of that establishment had desired to offer her.

But, after all—why? Was she to go on forever, sewing for other women until the luster was dead in her eyes, and the fresh youth had perished from

her face? Was she to go on forever, until her hands were twisted with rheumatism, like poor old Mrs. Rickey's, her neighbor in the grim model tenement uptown, who had obtained this job for her just when she was at the end of her resources after her dismissal from Cérise's? Was she to go on like this forever? She, who did not believe in virtue or in vice, who loved no one, hoped nothing—why should she go on like this?

She was as far from desiring one of the destinies which the sisters used to hold up as good as she was from desiring the other; she had no more wish to be "some good man's wife" than she had "to become a religious, abjuring the world, and giving her life to God." Some good man's wife! That was probably what her poor mother had dreamed of in her fond, silly youth.

She looked out malevolently upon the back yard of the Sisters of St. Theresa, and upon the sister in the shiny black bonnet who was still cleaning the walk. Was it possible that she had reviewed her whole life in the few seconds that it had taken the sister to wash half the walk? That was like what they said about drowning men—they saw all their pasts unrolled in the few, few seconds while their souls were passing.

Well, perhaps she was a drowning woman. Perhaps she was about to yield up all her past, all her loveless, bitter, starved past. Perhaps she was about to lose her life—her spiritual life, as they would have said at St. Rose's. For certain it was that she had come to a conclusion, to a decision. She was done with life as she had lived it!

She put down the shimmery green stuff upon which she was working. She went to the door of the upstairs sitting room, where she heard Mrs. Leslie gossiping with a friend.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Leslie," she said, in her even voice, "but I have a bad headache. I must go home. No, thank you—no tea, no powders, nothing. Oh, if I should not be able to finish your work myself, I should certainly send you some one else as capable."

She put on her winter hat; she could

not afford a spring one yet. She set it carefully upon her burnished locks, and she took some pleasure in her appearance. And then she walked out of the house, and up the avenue to Cérise's, up the stairs, slowly past the manager's office toward the workrooms. He saw her, he called to her, he eyed her with his leering glance. And by and by he sent his assistants from the room, and behind the closed door he talked to her. He opened the door in five minutes.

"Very well—to-morrow at six. You'll never regret it, Lizzie."

Then she walked out, and slowly, very slowly, made her way home to the grim model tenement.

"I came to-day, Mrs. Leslie," she told her employer, the next day, "but only to finish the green organdie. I have—a permanent position—that I—am—going to." She spoke slowly, but breathlessly. "But, if Mrs. Rickey isn't well enough to come to you to-morrow, I can send another girl."

She scarcely heard the murmurs of dismay and of doubt with which Mrs. Leslie received this announcement. She settled down with the material in her lap. St. Rose's training was inexorable; she could no more have left that dress half finished than she could have waved her arms and flown away. She sat there, mechanically measuring, joining, sewing. The faint scent of the lilacs came through the window. A little wind stirred the new leaves on the plane tree.

Suddenly she raised her head, star-



Twenty voices in varying keys sang: "Salve Regina!"

ted. A burst of sound filled the air—pianos playing different tunes, young, untrained, unharmonized voices singing loudly. Mrs. Leslie, coming to the room, listened also, with a laugh.

"They've begun to practice the commencement program at St. Theresa's," she said. "From now until June we have to choose between being deafened or asphyxiated. Awful, isn't it?" as twenty voices in varying keys sang: "Salve, Regina!"

Hymn after hymn followed, song after song, all the same old hymns and songs that she had been wont rebelliously to sing at command in her youth at the orphanage. The day passed to the sound of unforgotten discords. She could hear, in her fancy, Sister Mary Agatha saying despairingly: "No, no—this way. Now try it all together

again!" Some one was obviously saying the same thing in the sisters' school here to-day.

"It is absurd—it is insane!" she cried out suddenly; after an hour or two, during which she had listened as intently as if for a sentence of life or death. "What is this singing to me? My mind is made up!"

She saw them—all the check-frocked little girls with their straight hair, their funny little mouths opened, their eyes anxiously fixed upon the sister's face, or her baton—all the little orphans in the detested orphanage, all the victims of misfortune or of lack of love. Better they had all died—better she had died then! Better to be with the little baby who had closed those old, old, wise, tired eyes of his so long ago.

"Oh, purest of creatures, sweet Mother, sweet Maid!"

The shrill, childish voices proclaimed it as they had been wont to do at St. Rose of Lima's. She suddenly dissolved in tears; she sobbed—hard, cruel sobs, like a man's. Instantaneously she learned that there is power in a mem-

ory to coerce a will. She could not be what she had declared she would be; she had to be what that patient mother, that fragile bit of babyhood which had perished so soon, that hated, orderly school, had all made her. But there was a sense of awful relief in the knowledge; and in the rain of tears that came with it there seemed to be a crust washed away from her heart. And there was almost a humble joy in the thought that no one could lightly rid herself of her past.

"Do you know, I have quite changed my mind about that Miss Bartram, Dan?" said Mrs. Leslie, later in May. "She wasn't well, at first—that was all. I'd like to take her up the country with us, as sort of maid, and seamstress, and housekeeper. You don't mind, do you?"

"You've never taken a treasure up yet, you remember, but you've lost her to one of the young farmers in the neighborhood or to some one in the village. But if you want to risk it again, it's nothing to me, my dear," said the docile Dan. "I'm an American husband—I know my place!"



Down the Glen of Kirkland

DOWN the glen of Kirkland
Shake the little leaves,
With all the rustling laughter
Of the tall corn sheaves.

Down the glen of Kirkland
Crystal waters fall,
With all the tinkling laughter
Of a madrigal.

Down the glen of Kirkland
Vireos rejoice,
With all the flutelike laughter
Of my loved one's voice!

Down the glen of Kirkland
Who should come but she,
The very echo of whose step
Is melody!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

The LADY IN THUN



By
Anne Witherspoon.

Author of "The Finding of Moses," "Miss Althea's Christmas," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

SHE is too friendly for an *Anglaise*," said the blue-frocked, rosy-cheeked baker, as the Lady in Thun passed on her way one afternoon outside his shop.

"But she is too gentle-voiced for an *Américaine*," objected the shoemaker, buying his afternoon loaf.

"She has the air *charmante*," observed the little spinster dressmaker, who was waiting her turn before the trays of crisp, freshly baked loaves.

The object of these remarks pursued her way, unconscious of attracting notice, and much too absorbed in her own thoughts to be observant.

She was, as a matter of fact, an American. She had left her own country because of unhappiness there. And she had found in Switzerland some of the repose of mind she had lost. She had grown attached to the tidy, thrifty Bernese canton, with its clear, sweet air and charming scenery. And she had

chosen Thun because it was not one of the more obvious spots, and because, except at certain seasons, it was almost deserted by visitors. Even during the short, crowded summer she could be quiet in her rooms, set high above the town on the pine-scented hillside. In the winter she had the quaint town, and the townsfolk, and the wide, rushing Aare that swept through the tiny place practically to herself. The big hotel was closed up, all except a corner which was kept open for any chance passing tourist.

Last winter a tourist had stopped, *en passant*—and had stayed.

He was an Englishman—a big, clean, hearty, wholesome sort of man. He had evidently only intended to pass through on his way to higher places, the sort that Englishmen frequent in winter. But for some reason he had stayed on. And he and madame used often to be seen together, walking. She was



And he and madame used often to be seen together, walking.

light, quick-moving, and graceful, and he, like all of his nationality, was never so happy as when taking some form of exercise.

The townsfolk thought they made a fine-looking couple, and predicted a romantic ending, resulting in marriage bells and the loss of their Lady of Thun.

But on this afternoon the lady was alone, and she wore a preoccupied, wistful air. Her charming gray eyes were full of visions, whether of the future or the past, who could say? They were not altogether happy visions, perhaps, and yet a light of mingled hope and uncertainty played over her countenance. From living so much in the snows the lady had acquired a lovely pink tinge, like the Alpine glow, that went extremely well with her soft gray eyes and delicately bright brown hair. For the same reason, perhaps, she had acquired a buoyancy and resiliency of movement that she had not possessed when she first came to Thun. The

townspeople remembered that she used to walk languidly, and always with her Alpine stick, which now she never used except for actual climbing.

The lady held a letter in her hand, and she seemed to be looking about for a place to read it; for presently she selected a bench commanding a view of the wide-flowing river, shadowed by a lime tree; and there she sat down and read the letter through. It was a letter written by herself, and it was addressed to the Englishman.

It ran as follows:

You have asked me to write my reply, if it was to be yes; and to leave the letter with the concierge at the Beau-Site this afternoon by six o'clock. Otherwise, finding no reply, you will understand that our paths, which have come together so pleasantly for a time, are to diverge henceforth.

You have never asked me much about myself; but I feel all the more bound to tell you what I can.

I am not a widow, as you probably suppose. At least, if my former husband is dead I have not heard of it. I have not seen or heard of him in many years; and it is about him and our life together that I wish to tell you.

I loved him very much when I married him. But his nature was smirched, and blackened, and rendered hideous to me by one degrading weakness—alcoholism. The doctors say now that this is a disease, that one is not to be held responsible. I don't know. I was brought up to believe above all things in cleanness and self-respect. There is no horror like that of seeing the being you love befouled with an uncleanness of body or mind, such as must inevitably result from this—disease.

I left him. After a while I obtained a

divorce. I left all the old surroundings, the old life. I put the ocean, and silence, and separation between us.

You will say, then, that that page is forever turned. But is it? Can one's mind ever become wiped clean of old sorrows?

I put it to you frankly. Are you willing to take the risk? And even if you are, is it right for you to do so? Can you feel the future, and your love for me, certain enough? For my own part, I have no doubts as to the wisdom of this step for me, if I consider selfishly only my own good. To be able to *respect* the man one loves! What can be more deeply satisfying to a woman? And yet—and yet—I can only say that in the old anguish there was a vitality, a life, that would perhaps be lacking in the new joy.

You have brought into my empty existence the joys of comradeship. I do care for you. I believe that I could love you dearly. But—it would not kill me if you went out of my life. Perhaps the old imperative need of being loved is gone, will never return. Perhaps the fire burned too quickly when I was young, and the fuel is used up. I am no psychologist. I cannot say. Perhaps I would express it better by saying that I am not afraid for myself, but I am a little afraid for you.

I can hear you laugh at this—as at the meticulous scruples of a timid woman. And if you laugh—so much the better for me! I need reassurance and courage. One big failure in life shakes one's self-confidence to the foundations.

And so, my dear, if, after reading this, your feeling is unchanged, you will find me here, beside the river—waiting for you.

ELIZABETH CHALMERS.

Having read this letter through thoughtfully, the lady sat holding it in her hand. Her eyes wandered out over the river, moving resistlessly on its appointed course. There are no indecisions in nature.

"Yes," she murmured finally. "this is what I wished to say. I shall marry him. It is the best thing for me to do. And I shall try to make him happy. I am glad it is done."

But, with the actual committing of herself to a definite decision, a subtle change seemed to creep over the lady's mood. It was like the delicate, almost imperceptible gathering of a mist over a landscape. A slight grayness and bleakness took possession of her mind.

"I have lived selfishly for so long," she reflected, "that the thought of taking any one else into my life is disturb-

ing. It is a good thing for me that I am going to be married." Her reflections were more or less elliptic.

She felt no doubt of the Englishman's answer. He was too deeply in love to be withheld by scruples of so impalpable a nature. With one great laugh he would sweep them out of his horizon. And his was the right way, the downright, positive course that leads to something definite.

"I have wasted my life," she reflected sadly. "I am like the man who had a talent and buried it. I had a talent for loving, but it is moldy from disuse."

Suddenly she wondered if her husband were dead—and how he had finished his frustrated, wounded life. Her mind refused to accept the possibility that he was somewhere at this moment alive and wretched. And then, with a veering of thought: What would he think of her marriage if he heard of it? Had he ceased to care? Would he hear it with indifference? He had not tried to keep her from leaving him. He had not put the least obstacle in her way. But to this day his eyes haunted her, with their dumb, voiceless appeal. And she could see, as though it were yesterday, the vision of his white face, as he listened to her violent arraignment.

"Don't you see—can't you understand," she had flung out, with all the concentrated passion and bitterness of the months of heaped-up, unspoken reproaches, "that you have *killed* my love for you? That I have nothing left but contempt and loathing for a creature so feeble, so base?"

He had shrunk and blanched visibly under the fire of her words. He had made no attempt to reply, and none to justify or excuse himself. She had never seen him since that day.

And yet she *had* loved him, she told herself now. She had given him what she could give no other man. And he had trampled it under foot—that young, happy confidence, that adoring reverence that constituted the very groundwork of her nature. He had not cared. He had brought hideous shame and suffering upon her. And yet—how happy

she had been at first, before she knew. He had possessed for her a charm that was almost indestructible, that even now wrenched her heart, and mocked her with the consciousness of her broken life and withered hopes.

Ah, well—she thrust away these old memories with a little shudder—a new life was opening before her. She was going to marry a good, strong, clean man, whom she liked and respected, one who deserved all she could give him. And she meant to give him a great deal—all the dormant, stored-up tenderness that would surely come to life again with this demand upon it.

Should she go now, and leave her letter with the concierge? He would not arrive before six. But she meant him to find it waiting for him. It was now—she looked at her watch—five. There was still plenty of time.

As, glancing down the road, she saw a figure approaching, she smiled, and the flush on her smooth cheek deepened; at the same time she shrank a little back into the shade. After all, then, he could not wait. But no—how could she have made such a mistake? This was not Alan Braithwaite. It was a much slighter man altogether.

The newcomer walked feebly, leaning on his stick, his eyes bent on the ground, his soft hat pulled over his face.

Without observing her presence, he sank down with a heavy sigh, as of one who had little strength, on the bench nearest to hers, which was half screened by the deep shade of the lime tree. He stretched his arm along the back of the bench, and supported his head on his hand.

Mrs. Chalmers observed him curiously; and she could not help contrasting, with a little, irrepressible thrill of pride, the fine, upstanding figure of the man she was to marry. This man looked like one beaten in the game of life. His shoulders slouching forward, his bent head, the passiveness of his attitude, all proclaimed a profound weariness and apathy, if not actual illness.

Presently he straightened up, pushed back his hat, and turned his head in her direction.

And she saw—that it was her husband!

He saw her also, and her heart stood still. But, after a cursory glance, he turned away indifferently, with no recognition in his face.

For a moment she sat undecided, trying to still the great tumult of her very soul. Should she get up quietly and walk away? He was no part of her life now, and what was the use of reawakening the painful past? She rose, and moved a step or two away. Then, somehow, suddenly to her own surprise she found herself standing, looking down upon him, meeting his puzzled glance.

"Don't you know me, Geoffrey?" she said.

A sudden flush swept over his thin face, as he rose awkwardly to his feet.

"Is it really you, Elizabeth?" he said, without offering his hand. "How well you look! How you have changed! No, I did not know you."

He did not ask her to remain, but involuntarily they sat down side by side on the bench, in painful constraint over the unexpected encounter.

"I am sorry *you* are not looking well," she remarked finally, speaking with an effort; and the slight tremor of agitation in her voice caused him to give her a swift, suspicious look.

He made no direct reply to her words.

"Tell me about yourself," he said. "You look amazingly well—and happy. I suppose you have married again. I have often thought of you, and hoped you might find the man who could make you happy—who would make up for all the past, for the bad beginning."

"No," returned Mrs. Chalmers hesitatingly. "I have not married again. Have you?"

"I? No," he replied briefly.

"But," he pursued, breaking the pause after these last words, "at least you have found something to live for, an interest in life. Your face shows that. You have grown more beautiful."

He spoke quietly, with an air of impersonality that was nevertheless full

of a pathos that touched his companion deeply.

"I have been very well," she said hastily. "But tell me of yourself. In all these years I have heard nothing. I hope that life has brought you also something of compensation."

"I don't know whether you would call it compensation," he answered. "Certainly I have not had anything that might be called happiness. That," he added, with his curiously detached air, "left me when you did. But, do you know, Elizabeth, you left something in its place."

She looked at him questioningly.

"A new point of view," he finished. "The things you said at parting gave me much to think of—"

"I have often wished," she said, half stammering, "to have the opportunity of telling you how much I regretted those words. They were needlessly, abominably cruel. You had enough to bear without my reproaches. It is late to say so, but I wish to ask your forgiveness—" To her own surprise her voice choked and broke.

He turned his head, and regarded her with surprise.

"I have nothing to forgive," he said quietly. "You were perfectly in the right. And your leaving me as you did proved to me what I had never, strange as it may seem, realized before; that by



The newcomer walked feebly, leaning on his stick, his eyes bent on the ground.

my own weakness I had slain the thing I cared for most in life—your love. The shock of that realization—"

"Yes?" she urged gently.

Unconscious of her intense gaze, he watched the swans in a quiet backwater near the opposite shore, where the reeds grew tall and straight.

"It is oftenest but a drawn battle, and only sometimes victory," he admitted. "But the effort is never remitting now; even if it does leave me a broken man physically. After every desperate encounter, after the worst defeats, I come out of the struggle with my will strengthened and my desire to win more intense than ever."

"That is wonderfully brave; it is heroic of you," she answered, an intolerable constriction of pain at her heart as her eyes rested on his drawn face and his once stalwart manhood, now



"That is wonderfully brave; it is heroic of you," she answered.

spent, and wasted, and shrunken from the fearful conflict.

"Is it?" he returned, with a quiet smile. "I am glad you think so, my dear, for I owe it to you. When your love for me was alive it gave me a great deal, a great deal. When it died"—his face worked a little—"I decided I might somehow expiate my unforgivable crime in this way."

The woman beside him made no reply. Emotions, dim and chaotic, were surging within her. Pity, sorrow, and a divinely protecting impulse—the desire to give, give, give to this unasking, unexpected, broken, helpless being beside her; to pour out upon him, like myrrh and spikenard, the fountain of tenderness that rose in her heart like a force released. She fought with the impulse. She recalled Braithwaite, clean, strong, active, bold, who would take her into a busy, absorbing life—

was in her hand.

Obedying an irresistible, obscure impulse, she leaned forward, and laid the letter on his knee.

"Read this," she said.

He took the letter, glanced at the superscription, and hesitated; but the imperious command in her eyes constrained him.

He read it through, and then slowly folded it up, and handed it back to her. His eyes rested upon her with the light of their old kindness, almost with something of their old affection.

"I am glad," he said, "that this good thing has come to you. I thank you for letting me know."

He made a slight movement, as if he would get up and go; but she put out a detaining hand.

"Wait," she said hoarsely. "I—I haven't sent the letter yet."

entirely away from all the old memories. What could the other alternative hold but a renewal of the old dread, and always the poignant sadness of beholding daily at her side the wreck of manhood that would mock her with the ghost of their dead youth? She had only to pass on her way, and out of his life forever. He had no claim upon her, not the slightest. She had as good as promised to marry the other man. Her promise

"But you are going to, are you not?" he asked gently.

"I don't know," she faltered. Then, with a sudden restrained violence of tone: "That depends upon you."

"I don't think I quite know what you mean," he said uncertainly.

"I mean," she said, with a catch in her breath, but striving to speak calmly, "that, if you wish—if you desire it—oh, how can I say it?" as he looked at her with increasing bewilderment. "The past is over and done with—all its unhappinesses and mistakes. Could we not begin again, a new life, on a new basis?"

She clasped her hands, and leaned toward him.

His dull and faded eyes slowly moistened, and into his face crept the light of a great tenderness.

"My dear," he said gently, "this is noble and generous of you. I know it springs from your pity, and I thank you for it. But it could not be. I have sunk very low, but I could not take you from your happiness. And besides, I still have, curiously enough, a remnant of pride. You told me long ago that I had killed your love——"

"Oh, you must forget that," she cried. "Besides, it was not true. A real love, a thing that has entered into your very life and constitution, cannot be killed. I know that now." She paused a moment. "I suffered horribly in those days; but I suffer more now, in seeing you—like this."

Her voice dropped to a whisper, but her eyes implored him to believe.

"No, no," he said huskily. "You mistake the impulse of pity for something else. I cannot accept such a sacrifice. You must forget that you have seen me."

"Geoffrey, it is *not* pity! I have no pity to give you. All the pity is for myself—for those lost years when we might have been together. I love you for what you have done. You have proved your strength, your courage. The old enemy is dead."

He lifted his hand with a gesture infinitely sad.

"Can one ever be sure? The fire seems stamped out, but can one be sure that it will never spring to life again? I am like a man walking in ambush. I shall be all my life. You know—my father went the same way."

"Yes," he continued, "but I did not know it myself, until the curse descended upon me, and then many things became clear. I realized why my mother had always such a tragically sad face, why my father had so many mysterious illnesses. Child as I was, I did not comprehend. She always stood between me and this black shadow. Perhaps it would have been better for me if—in her divine love and protection—she hadn't. I might have been warned. As it was, I fell into the pit of my inheritance unawares."

The woman beside him listened silently. And her own cowardice, all those years that he had been fighting a desperate battle alone, all those years that she had refused her task, had denied her love, and sought an ignoble safety, rose and confronted her like an accusing sword of fire. She saw clearly, as by a blinding flash, the limitations of her own nature. They mocked her with their narrowness, their blindness to bitter human need, their rigid insistence upon conformity to her own rule and measure—and she hid her face in her hands, ashamed to the soul.

He misunderstood her gesture.

"And so you see, my dear," he added chivalrously, "you have everything opening before you, everything that makes for happiness with most women. You must not turn your back upon it all to take up life—existence, rather—with a battered wreck of humanity like me, who has at most only a few years to live. What can there be in such a prospect to attract you?"

His mouth twisted in a melancholy smile meant to be humorous, reassuring.

But she did not smile. She lifted her head, and turned upon him two eyes swimming with a light he had never seen in them before, a light that seemed to shine out from the inmost soul of her.

"I don't know," she murmured. "I only know that with you is life. Away from you is existence. I can't explain it. But I choose *you*—if you will have me."

Their eyes met in a long, searching gaze. Hers did not falter, nor lose their steadiness; and in his something of the old spirit seemed to struggle to rise to meet her on this new level of inward, spiritual vision, cleared of all fears, all haunting dreads and doubts.

"And this?" he asked gently, touching the letter.

She tore it across.

"There is my answer."

"I will put a bullet through my brain if I fail you again," he said hoarsely, and his shoulders heaved with a sudden, tearless sob of deep emotion.

"I am not afraid," she said softly, stretching out her hands to his, "whether you fail—or not."

One day, soon after this chance encounter beside the river of Thun, the townspeople became greatly excited over an event that occurred in their little town. There had been a wedding service in the pretty little English

church. Their lady was married and gone. But the bridegroom!

They were deeply disappointed and mystified. The matter afforded endless discussion. What had become of the handsome Englishman? Why had his place been taken by this stranger dropped apparently from the skies—a slight, feeble-looking man, with nothing of the conventional bridegroom in his aspect? Who was he? Why had he so suddenly carried off their beautiful lady, who had lived among them so long alone? It was an impenetrable mystery.

Many opinions were expressed, but perhaps the most satisfactory sentiment concerning the event was the comment made by the little spinster dressmaker:

"He wasn't much of a man, to judge by looks, to be sure," she said, biting off a thread. "But his eyes looked at her as if she were the open gates of paradise—and he was 'most afraid to enter in."

"And she," asked the baker skeptically, "how did *she* look?"

The little dressmaker smiled.

"Oh, *she*," she said softly, "she was already in paradise!"



To Robert Browning

WHAT though my house a cabin on a hill,
 With naught of ornament save yonder vine,
 Whereon the sun in morning warmth doth shine,
 Lighting the flowers to loveliness at will;
 What though my lands be unabundant—still,
 I am most fortunate! One friend is mine,
 Whose words are meat to me and cool, fresh wine;
 Whose thought doth kindle when all others chill;
 Whose face I never saw—whom yet I sing:
 Ardent, benign, how full of hope and strong!
 As poet, he wrought the wonder of The Ring;
 As teacher, calm was he—a seer in song,
 Seeing beyond the sad world's suffering,
 Walking in love his fellow men among!

P. R. CALDER.



Cleopatra at Peterkin

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

Author of "Prexy's Niece," "The Feminine Principle," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

WERE Granny a freshman, to us of Hot Tamale Tau frat, at old Peterkin, she might have indicated a sister or favorite "teacher" who prepared him for a shining career at college, or other reminder of the near, dear past at Row-of-Corn Sidings. But Granny was a junior law, and much beyond the touching period when to the wayfarer in the great, cold world of hash and classes the family portraits on exhibition are necessary to life, happiness, and the pursuit of knowledge. So this was his "girl"; naught more, naught less.

She sat in a gilt frame upon Granny's dresser in his room at the frat house. Yes, there she sat, perpetual, by her aloneness and monopoly stamping Granny as a married man; or as bad as married. Had there been a dozen or two of her, placed about promiscuously, nobody would have noticed except to comment, here and yon, with delicate approval: "Say, who's this beaut?" But she being the only one, nobody would have the nerve to ask "Who?" because everybody could see.

She looked to us like a peach. Sort of side view, half peeking up at you, with a dislocated-neck effect and a bunch of hair in high light. You know the kind of fancy photo.

Granny being our only married man—man with a seriously solid girl, you

understand—we might consider him with varying emotions. Occasionally, in the tender twilight, we could get Granny to talk about her and her marvelous qualities outside and inside, and we could experience the sensations of a few wistful thrills. It must be a tremendously satisfying feeling, to own a girl, and get a letter from her every day, and know that she was expecting a letter from you every day, and to be assured that no other fellow had any show with her, and that when you were off the premises they were vacant until your return, and to have your future settled, with you cleaving to her, and she cleaving to you, and your furniture all picked out. Such a state of affairs settled lots of bother.

Again, occasionally we might cast glances of pity upon Granny, as a mortal who was missing a heap of fun. What's the use of taking a course at a coed college if you have a girl at home? What's the use of donning a muzzle, and then sitting down to charlotte russe—or Claribel, or Helena, or Mazy, or Daisy, or any other dish of the gods?

However, after we had viewed her for a year, we grew to accept her as the inevitable, which comes to every man sooner or later, ante or post sheepskin, and to respect her as our regular Hot Tamale Tau sister *in absentia*, and to plan in our scarce idle moments

upon the wedding gift. Fact is, there was some discussion among Biffy, and Spuds, and Dink, and myself, as to whether we ought not to start a sinking fund for that object. But whatever funds we had were always sinking, anyhow.

Down to date Granny had been prevented from introducing to Peterkin social circles his girl in the flesh. This was hard on us, and it was hard on the substitute girl whom he blew to functions. He attended upon her with a carefully fatherly air, that told her she might touch, but couldn't take.

But my province in this tale is to tell about the time when we at last met Granny's girl. The event from which hatched out this greater event, as from the chrysallis emerges—but no matter! The event was, I say, the Greater Peterkin University Post Lenten Prom. The G. P. U. P. L. P.! Yes.

If you live anywhere between Yale and Stanford you've heard about this prom, as its glories pass from bated breath to bated breath. We at old Peterkin have all the proms going—freshman prom, sophomore prom, junior prom, Pan-Hell prom, Hot Tamale Tau prom, other Greek near-proms, impromptu proms, proximity-prom proms, and then some. But let me whisper, that next to the Hot Tamale Tau annual prom, the only real thing in proms is, will be, and ever has been—since invented—the G. P. U. P. L. P. Wow!"

Isn't copyrighted—nope. Anybody who can ring the cane can have it; all that is required is the price and the nerve. Never costs less than eleven dollars and forty-five cents per man, not to mention new shirt and gloves, flowers and carriage. Just lip the mystic symbols G. P. U. P. L. P. to some American graduate or ex-collegian. If a man he'll grunt; if a girl she'll sigh. 'Nough said.

Granny announced that to this G. P. U. P. L. P. his girl was surely coming—barring Jupiter Pluvius, broken rail, sick mother, or other interruption which had figured in the past. Nothing could have created more excitement—no, not

the news that Biffy Robins had removed all his conditions—in Hot Tamale Tau circles than this asseveration from Granny that his *dea ex machina* was about to arrive.

The prospect was lovely. But right at the eve of culmination Granny pleaded guilty to the mumps. He being a particularly tough case—a junior law crammed with torts, equities, and other complications—the consulting staff of physicians and surgeons hustled him off to the varsity hospital to hold a clinic over him. He was valuable material.

And the girl was on the way! Thus fate pursued him ever.

Now, that was hard on Granny. Any man who gets to be a junior law, and then lapses into mumps, evidently has not the mental firmness of a Webster; and we were doubly sorry for Gran that he should be touched in head and heart both. But quick action was necessary. As a committee of two, Biffy and I were permitted by the hospital staff to talk with Granny and a pretty nurse through a crack in the doorway. We endeavored to be cheerful, and ignore Granny's thick utterances, while we provoked the tinkling notes of the nurse.

"Hello! Shall we telegraph her?" greeted Biffy, breathless.

"Yes! Will you?" bit Granny, not only wild, but pitiable. His candid anxiety was pathetic.

"She's his girl back home," we explained politely to the pretty nurse. 'Twas better that she know.

Pretty nurse took it bravely, and nodded. We were in time to save her from any of Granny's wiles.

"Engaged to her six years," further explained Biffy. For the pretty nurse must fully comprehend that our Granny was totally immune.

"Never went with, kept company with, sat up with, any other," supplemented I.

"Childhood sweethearts," continued Biffy.

"Have their future little home almost paid for on the installment plan," continued I.

"And the furniture waiting in storage," interjected Biff.

"Shut up!" suggested Gran. "Are you going to send that wire?" He was changing the subject. "You'll have to hurry, or you won't catch her."

"Then let her come, and we'll take her ourselves," proposed Biff.

"Say! Will you?" gurgled Granny. "I'll be awfully obliged, and so will she. I don't care so much for myself—missing the prom—but it's a darned shame —" And he choked.

Very pathetic, indeed! We discreetly turned aside our faces, and the nurse applied her handkerchief.

"How'll you manage?" asked Granny, recovered.

"She can go with my girl and me," quoth Biffy.

"She can go with my girl and me," quoth I.

How strong are the bonds of Hot Tamale Tau, which inculcate such a generous rivalry—and which admit of it!

"What time will she get in?" queried Biffy.

"To-morrow morning, at 'leven sharp."

"Is she stunning?" invited the pretty nurse.

"Ask Granny."

"They've seen her picture. They ought to know," adduced Gran, as star testimony.

"But haven't you ever seen her, herself?" demanded of us the pretty nurse.

"Only as fancy paints her," explained I.

"Then will you recognize her?"

"They've seen her picture," argued Granny. "Haven't you, fellows? There's one on my dresser."

There was, very much. We had, very much.

"Medium height," said Biffy.

"Not too tall, and not too short," said I.

"Brown hair," recited Biffy.

"Not too light, and not too dark," recited I.

"Big, gray eyes."

"But with a touch of blue and of hazel."



Yes, there she sat, perpetual, by her aloneness and monopoly stamping Granny as a married man; or as bad as married.

"Rosebud mouth."

"But firm when in repose."

"Classic profile."

"But winsome, and not severe."

"Number six-and-a-quarter glove."

"Number three-and-a-half A shoe."

"Very sweet disposition."

"Father is a merchant."

"Have we forgotten any item, Granny?" we concluded. When——

"But what will she have on?" demanded the pretty nurse.

And Granny didn't know!

"Then," declared the pretty nurse, aghast, "I don't see how in the world you'll ever recognize her."

Well, we did. Granny had told us all about her, and identification by a pea-green hat and a waist trimmed with Irish potatoes on the bias would not have helped us one bit. Of such matters we had no ken; Biffy himself, although society editor of the *Daily Peterkin*, shirked them. Amid some sacred precincts even the sophomoric foot fears to tread.

I proceed. We departed, with a smile from the pretty nurse, and Gran-

ny's blessing tagged on. Loving Granny with the love of Hot Tamale Tau, and nerved to love his girl, also, we must make all preliminary arrangements necessary and extra, but not superfluous.

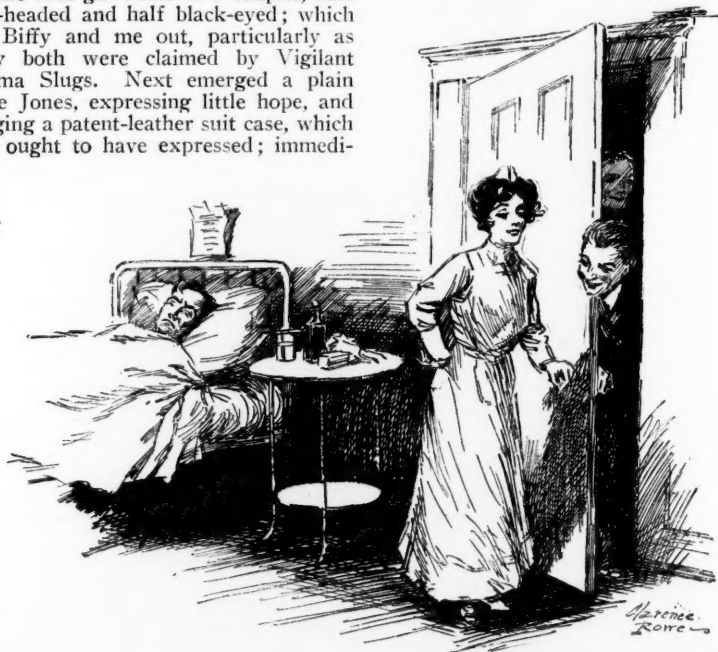
We left the frat house—considerably excited, it, and rife with volunteers for our job—and proudly in a carriage, dedicated to Granny's girl, and charged to the Hot Tamale Tau sinking fund, we wended to the station—Biffy wearing an entirely new, untried tie, which eked out his wardrobe to sixty-seven.

Of course, on occasion of a prom, especially the G. P. U. P. L. P., the Hot Tamale Tau house and all the near-Greek shacks get infested with girl and chaperon; and therefore the station was somewhat frequented by expectant youth in their most fetching garbs. In rolled the train, and, with flourish of cinders, halted, to disgorge.

The first girl came in a couplet, half red-headed and half black-eyed; which let Biffy and me out, particularly as they both were claimed by Vigilant Sigma Slugs. Next emerged a plain Jane Jones, expressing little hope, and lugging a patent-leather suit case, which she ought to have expressed; immedi-

ately overshadowed, she, by a gorgeous princess in a Merry Widow lid. Biffy promptly advanced to peer beneath the lid, but an Oh My Omicron advanced faster, and captured the prize. However, girls were arriving thick and fast.

The train was a regular magician's hat, containing greater hats and other marvels. 'Twas delicate work, inspecting eyes, and mouths, and hair, and temper, amid such a galaxy. No purveyor to the Kaliph of Keosaukuk ever had a more ticklish job. Not too light and not too dark, not too tall and not too short, not too thick and not too thin, eyes gray with a touch of blue and hazel, rosebud mouth but firm in repose—none of these girls were reposing—profile classic but winsome and not severe, number six-and-a-quarter glove, number three-and-a-half A shoe, and a very sweet disposition; don't all speak at once!



"Engaged to her six years," further explained Biffy.

Biffy, with a glad "Aha!" made a graceful dive for a peacherino, and ran into a clinch with a Zeta Zip by name of Bartholomew. I had her sure, but a roughneck barb from Pondlilyville seemed to have her surer, and waltzed her off, accompanied by a chilly look at me.

If you ever played that game of prisoner-in-the-ring, where one extra man must always be "it," you can see Biffy and me sharing that privilege. Two by two and four by four they melted away. So did the train, and only the platform and our carriage remained.

"She didn't come," said Biffy, aghast. Was his tie to go untried?

But then, companion remnant, we discovered the Jane Jones and her patent-leather grip! They made a doleful combination, left high and dry by the receding tide. Damsel in distress should not appeal vainly to heart of Hot Tamale Tau and Peterkiniensis. She was not externally a screaming success, but no doubt she was internally very nice. Biffy went across; me, too.

"I beg your pardon," quoth Biffy, with his best society-editor salute, and wasting not his sixty-seventh tie. "But can we be of any assistance?"

"I don't know," she faltered. "I—I was expecting to be met."

"Ah!" quoth Biffy. "Who by?"

"By whom?" corrected I. Biffy is so careless with strangers.

"It was Mr. Whitten; Mr. P. J. Whitten. I'm afraid—there's been some mistake."

Whitten! Jumping Jupiter! This was *she*! She, the girl of perfection stature, weight, hair, eyes, mouth, profile, foot-and-hand dimension, and disposition, as aforesaid!

"Oh!" gasped Biff, paling. "You are Miss—"

She were. No, there was no mistake, now.

"I," informed Biffy, rallying, "am Mr. Robins. Granny has the mumps, and has given me the privilege of meeting you, and taking you up to the house, where three chaperons are waiting in attendance. Take the lady's grip, James."

I took it. With the damsel somewhat bewildered, he led off. I followed. We entered the carriage. We rolled up the street, and explanations followed. Also followed our dream, but didn't catch up.

For this was Granny's girl—this lack-luster miss who could have paraded the campus in a hoggled-hobble and a basket hat, and never have made a head turn. Nothing doing in the beauty line; nothing especial doing in the homely line. The mountain surely had given birth to a mouse—a country mouse—but some photographer had known how to fake with his camera.

However, we couldn't throw her out, for she was Granny's, and was sacred as long as he had the mumps. In fact, she would be in no danger, afterward.

At the house we disembarked, and Biffy gallantly escorted her in. I was nothing loath to let him have the honor, and I carried the grip—but rapidly enough so that the cabbie should not overhaul me for the fare.

The frat house was full of revelry; our entry produced a respectful hush. Then the chaperons received her to their embraces, and Biffy and I were left to endure the glances of a sadly inquiring humanity.

I drew Biffy apart.

"You may take her—you and your girl," I proffered kindly.

"Don't depend on me," warned Biffy earnestly. "I may not go. I—I feel queer, Jocko. So you'd better take her—you and your girl."

"You're the oldest," I reminded.

"You're the homeliest," reminded he.

"But you promised Gran."

"So did you."

"Take her."

"Take her yourself."

After this friendly, brotherly little exchange of generous sentiment, I must depart downtown to pick out a dress shirt worthy of the G. P. U. P. L. P., and carrying a thirty-day coupon; and when I reentered the house somebody was inventing on the piano, and the fellows were singing.

I say "inventing on the piano," and I mean it. It wasn't the ordinary rag-

time; it was a distinct new kind. There was something about it that brought notes where notes never had been before, and even Biffy was squawking in harmony. Anybody who can get a true note out of Biffy's diaphragm is a witch or a wizard; Moses had an easier time getting water out of the rock—or was that Aaron? We ought to have a Bible school at Peterkin.

Well, in I hopped. Granny's girl was at the piano! Just for a moment I was startled, because the personage performing looked, for that moment, like the picture in Granny's room, and I believed that Biff and I might have convoyed a changeling. But no, 'twas she—the Jane Jones, only she had altered her waist, and was working her fingers. I don't mean her born waist; I mean her acquired waist—waist from the dressmaker or the delicatessen—no, modiste. A delicatessen waist is a Germany waist. But, as I was saying, no matter.

I sang. It was a Hot Tamale Tau song. The house and room were rife with pretty girls, but most of the fellows were here at the piano, like children attending on the Pied Piper of Hamlet—or Ham-something. She glanced up, and smiled with her eyes at me—and, do you know, those eyes were gray, with a touch of blue and hazel? That was another discovery. But still, she didn't look like her picture, again.

Biff nodded to me, and drew me apart.

"Well," he said, "going to take her?"

"Oh, I don't know. Are you?"

"Not if you are."

"Same here."

"If you aren't, though, I suppose that—"

"So can I," I hastened. "It's all right."

We went back to the piano.

Pretty soon she laughed. I was in a spot where I caught the laugh just at the proper visual angle; and below a tiny freckle on her nose I beheld the mouth! For a rapt and fleeting instant it was the mouth of Granny's imaginary fiancée—his girl back home, also on

his dresser; rosebud mouth, but firm in repose, and evoking a responsive pucker.

Huh!

Granny strolled off. I joined him.

"Going to take her?" he queried carelessly.

"Oh, I'd just as lief," I yawned.

He yawned.

"So had I. You needn't bother, after all. I'll do it. I owe Granny a good turn or two."

"But I may decide to take her myself."

Biffy's cool assurance made me tired. You'd have thought that he had been appointed Granny's sole executor.

"But you said you didn't want her."

"So did you."

We wandered back. I pictured Granny lying white and red, and lopsided, trusting that we brothers of Hot Tamale Tau were making his girl happy, and that she was in kind and tender hands, and I decided that I would take her to the prom. Biffy was mainly a two-stepper, anyway, and she ought to have a good waltzer, like yours truly.

Poor little thing!

The fellows didn't want her to quit, but she rose from the piano stool, and as one who knew her longest and best, in absence of Gran, and as one who had discovered the remarkable concurrence of eyes and mouth, I was the man to make life bearable for her. All would have been decent and fraternal if Biff had not disengaged himself from the fair aggregation, around-about, of pompadours and flounces, and insisted upon sticking closer than a brother should.

We paced, outdoors and in. I tried to make Biff understand that he must not sacrifice himself, but he was too thick-headed. Meantime she grew. I rediscovered the gray eyes with touch of blue and of hazel, and the rosebud mouth firm in repose—also puckerish—and decided that the hair was brown, not too light and not too dark, the profile classic but winsome and not severe, and the foot was size three-and-a-half A. And she grew—not the foot, just she—sort of evolved. But I didn't tell



Anybody who can get a true note out of Biffy's diaphragm is a witch or a wizard.

Biffy; and when, after she had gone upstairs to fuss herself for dinner, Biffy remarked casually: "Heigh-ho! I'm to take her, am I?" I felt it incumbent upon me to narrate, with equal unconcern: "No. I'll take her. You go ahead with the one girl."

"You go ahead with *your* one girl."

"But I thought you didn't want to take her."

"Thought *you* didn't want to take her."

"I didn't; but I will."

"No, you needn't; I'll take her myself."

"What makes you bother, old man? I won't mind."

"Of course you won't."

"Why won't I?"

We were waxing mad. Sounded like two boys playing marbles.

"Because I'll take her."

"Don't be an ass!"

"Don't be an ass yourself! She can't dance, I bet."

"She can't dress."

"Can't look."

"Pretty punk."

"Well," concluded Biffy, "anyway, I promised Gran, and I'll do it."

"You'll have to ask her first, then."

We sputtered across to the stairway, and stationed ourselves to catch her descending. Down she tripped, on the size three-and-a-half A foot, amid the gang, bevy, galaxy. Biffy and I pressed forward shoulder to shoulder, and cut her out.

"Miss——" addressed Biff.

"Randall——" addressed I.

"Do you know——"

"That you——"

"Are to give——"

"Me the great pleasure——"

"Of substituting me for Granny as——"

"As your escort——"

"To the prom——"

"To-night."

"To-night."

We finished neck and neck, nose and nose, breathless. Granny's girl laughed, and her eyes were there, and her mouth, and her hair, and her disposition. Wow!

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry; but Mrs. Willis"—she was a chaperon—"is to take me. I'm to be a wallflower."

She? Huh!

"Oh, say!" beefed Biffy.

"Not much!" politely protested I. "You were to go with me."

"Jocko's mistaken," contradicted Biff. "You were to go with me."

"I'm sorry," she cooed. "Really, I didn't understand. I must go with Mrs. Willis."

She passed. Biffy sighed.

"That," he confided solemnly, with a sudden rush of emotion, "is a queen."

"A pearl," I confessed.

"Wish I'd seen her before Granny did," he observed.

"Lucky dog!" sighed I.

"Have you noticed her—er—eyes?" ventured Biff.

"Y-yes," I admitted. "Sort of—er—mouth, too."

"Um-um!" agreed Biff. "Do you think she looks like her picture?"

"Kind of," I answered, cautious.

"So do I. If you get her card first to-night, chalk down every other number for me."

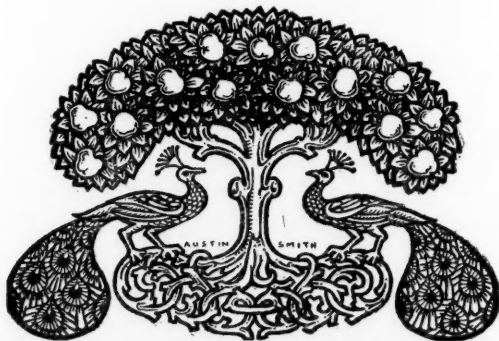
Yes, I would—*not!* He said that she couldn't dance, and he must eat his base libel.


For she could. Dance? Nay, not merely dance. She wafted, she floated, she drifted upon the stream of music. And I discovered another marvel; she fitted to a T, or, at least, to a J for Jocko! Her stature was, as Granny had described, exactly right, not too tall and not too short, not too thick and not too thin; and her hand certainly was the beautiful and convenient size of six and one-quarter. Heigh-hum! 'Twas a brilliant prom, soon over. Had I known Granny's girl before taking as well as after taking, I would have staggered it, and thereby have been free of domestic incumbrances.

Biffy and I divided the custody of the picture—fine likeness—on Granny's dresser until he got out of quarantine and grabbed it back.

Funny about girls! When she disembarked from the train we thought her homely. E'er she got on the train again we thought her the loveliest fairy that lived, and moved, and had her glorious being. Why? Search me! But Biff and I have concluded that is the reason for some men seeming to pick out the alleged—I'm going it cautiously—bad lookers. They've seen 'em first!

Cleopatra wasn't much of a beaut, according to some lads, but she was according to Anthony—and Anthony knew. So did Granny.





Carlton Reforms

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Lansing's Daughter," "Influencing Our Children," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

WHEN the Carltons moved into our coöperatively owned apartment house, the Lime Regis Arms, we all felt a distinct sense of relief—that is, after we had had opportunity to inspect them. Up to that time we were still in a state of simmering indignation against the Ravenel-Dowds, who had been responsible for the bringing in of the Carltons. It was only our second year in the L. R. A.—don't ask me the reason for the name! I never saw one myself, except that Gadsby's wife had gone mad over English things after a three-month tour of the British Isles, just before the apartment house was finished, and that Gadsby, for all that he was completely under her thumb, could outtalk any two men in the owners' conferences. However, all that has nothing to do with the case of the Carltons.

At the first owners' meeting of our second autumn in the L. R. A., Ravenel-Dowd reported his intention to sublet his apartment, and to go to Egypt for the winter. The men told Ravenel-Dowd what they thought of him—the owners' conferences are exclusively masculine as far as the actual presences are concerned; that is, no woman attends them in person, not even old Mrs. Dwight, who has been a widow these forty years, and who owns her apart-

ment in her own right; she lets her grandson represent her.

Well, as I was saying, the men told Ravenel-Dowd what they thought of him. Hadn't one of the features most emphatically and beguilingly dwelt upon when we were all led into the L. R. A. ownership scheme been the certainty that no undesirable or even uncordial tenants could ever mar our enjoyment of our property? Ravenel-Dowd, architect of the L. R. A., and chief promoter, had been particularly voluble on this advantage—and here, when a year of possession had barely elapsed, were he and his wife subletting.

But Ravenel-Dowd explained that they were subletting not to one of the barbarian horde of wandering apartment dwellers, but to dear friends, to the most charming people in the world, to persons who would undoubtedly have been their guests had they not been going to Egypt, to a couple who would have more than supplanted the absentees in our affections before they got back from Egypt—nay, before they had landed there.

And when we first saw the Carltons we were inclined to think that the Ravenel-Dowds had spoken truly.

They were youngish people—not a boy and girl to intrude ill-digested no-

tions and enthusiasms upon our seasoned wisdom and humor, not old people, with no zest for fun left in them; in fact, about the age of most of the rest of us, which was the most desirable age in the world. They were sufficiently good-looking to be a pleasure to critical eyes. Mrs. Carlton dressed well, but not with the effect of living solely for the benefit of the modistes, which some allegedly well-dressed women give. They had the same correct tastes in music, pictures, and bric-a-brac which the rest of us had.

But, above all, they gave us an impression of cordiality, of a readiness to be friendly, that promptly endeared them to us. Not until long after their first appearance did we discover that each one of us had been quite convinced that he or she was the recipient of a more truly warm and understanding regard from them than all the rest. I have used the awkward "he or she," but as a matter of fact I think that "she" would have more accurately conveyed my meaning. For, as we began to know by the end of a month, it was Tom Carlton, rather than his wife, who gave the effect of an abounding yet discriminating friendliness; she was acquiescent rather than active in helping him to diffuse that pleasant sense of sympathy and admiration which undoubtedly did attend their presence.

That he was rarely and conspicuously successful in this form of joy diffusion I cannot more pointedly state than by saying that the end of the Carltons' second month in the Lime Regis Arms found every woman in that admirably constructed apartment house convinced that there was just a little more sympathy between her and Mr. Thomas Carlton than between all the other women under its roof and that estimable gentleman.

Not, be it understood, that he was that cheapest of all social abominations, a flirtatious young married man. If he had been anything so distasteful to a refined and tolerably seasoned feminine fastidiousness as that, all the wifely decorum of the L. R. A. would have been arrayed, an unbroken phalanx,

against him. It was merely that he managed to infuse into the ordinary relations of civilized men and women a sort of individual flavor. As far as I know, he never kissed the hand of one of us, except old Mrs. Dwight; and as she was seventy-five, and as the salutation was public—even ostentatious—no indecorum could be discovered in it; and as she was very charming, with fine net fichus, and little lace caps, and delicate wrist frills, and quaintly set jewelry, no one could accuse Mr. Carlton of bad taste in the matter. That dear old Mrs. Dwight should have gradually come to feel that she occupied a sort of mother's place to him was not in any way his fault; nor was it a delusion liable to do the slightest injury to the gentle soul who fostered it.

It was only an elderly manifestation of the same feeling possessed by every other woman in the house—namely, that there existed between her and Mr. Carlton a bond slightly different, slightly finer, firmer, more beautiful, than that which linked him with the others.

We all knew "the best side of him" more intimately than the rest of the household knew it, so we thought.

I myself, though even in my salad days I was singularly and joyously free from the glamorous capacity of reading romantic meanings into commonplace, I myself was never able to rid myself of the conviction that I knew Tom Carlton on his most winning, most wholesome, side—his love for out of doors. I never took a tramp with him in my life; my Edward is an old-fashioned man for the age and the world in which we live, and he prefers that he himself should be the only masculine companion of the walks which are one of my keenest delights; yet, after the wet, brown November day when I accidentally met Mr. Carlton swinging through the deserted park, I always felt, as I have said, that I understood him a little better than the others in the house—an opinion which he was careful not to shatter.

And so it was with all of us—with Mrs. Laight, to whom he lent a German dictionary; with Miss Van Warne,

whose season's seat at the Symphony happened to adjoin the Carltons'; with Amy Leffenwell, who wrote plays that she never felt encouraged to show to actors or managers; with Mrs. Gray, who has been inclined toward spiritualism since her baby died—with all of us.

I cannot sufficiently emphasize the statement of how blameless and how subtle were the methods by which Mr. Carlton produced this agreeable feeling in so many excellent women at one time. I cannot sufficiently praise the delicacy of his system; for, firm as was the conviction of each one of us, so intangible

was the proof on which it was built that we could not even enter into a competition on the subject. When Cora Laight said it was a pity he was an architect, because Goethe had thereby lost a great interpreter, I could only smile derisively within myself; I had not the evidence at hand to prove that it was nature and exercise which divided his time with his profession—yet I knew it! And so, as later developments proved, did all the other women who heard Cora Laight lamenting the loss that Anglo-German letters had sustained when Tom Carlton took to the draftsman's board.



The men told Ravenel-Doud what they thought of him.

Well, not many weeks of that memorable winter passed before we discovered that Florence Carlton did not take kindly to these intangible, blameless alliances of her husband. She was, to put it baldly, jealous of him. We were a little indignant with her when we made this discovery—on our own accounts and on her husband's. Conscientious, for instance, that I had never walked a mile with her husband, it was annoying to me to see her well-defined eyebrows arch themselves cynically when she heard us discussing the joys of pedestrianism at the bridge-club supper.

Old Mrs. Dwight was sadly hurt when, at tea in the Goldsboroughs' one afternoon, Mrs. Carlton took occasion to remark, in her high, hard, little voice:

"Oh, Tom is a sort of adaptation of the sailor with a sweetheart in every port; Tom has a dear soul who regards him as a son in every city he has ever sojourned in for the space of a fortnight."

Seeing Mrs. Dwight's knitting needles waver uncertainly above her balls of silk, we all felt that it was outrageous for Tom Carlton's wife to cast her slings and arrows about her so promiscuously. We talked of the vulgarity of jealousy, and of the utterly unreasonable natures of the jealous. We developed a certain amount of pity among ourselves for Tom Carlton, tied to a woman who was really rather waspish—didn't our interlocutor think so?—for all her prettiness and the superficial charm of her manner.

Our husbands, of course, did not agree with us. They said:

"Bet she's had some pretty stiff doses to swallow. The fellow is a philanderer—any one can see that. Of course, he hasn't held hands with you in the dark, or asked you to elope with him, or even suggested to you that his life would have been quite different if he hadn't been married when a mere boy to a woman who—dear and good as she is, of course—hasn't developed congenially along the same lines with him. But the only reason he hasn't done those things is because you're not that kind,

not because he isn't. He sentimentalizes with every woman he meets, and when he finds a woman who will go a long way along the sentimental journey with him—why, he goes it, you can bet your boots!"

But this crude masculine summing up of Mr. Carlton's character did not change the feminine opinion that he was a genial, warm, friendly soul, mated to an exacting woman who might be capable even of vulgar jealousy.

There was one day, I remember, when the Lime Regis Arms was threatened with upheaval because of this possibility in Mrs. Carlton. She made a morning call on me, pushing her way past Mina, whose instructions are to bar forenoon visitors, if she has to resort to force to do it. Mrs. Carlton, overthrowing Mina's defenses, invaded the studio where I sat conscientiously trying to give a spiritual look to the miniature of a child of eight, whose contour, complexion, and general configuration suggested only a nicely scrubbed young pig.

I gazed at the intruder with an annoyance which rapidly changed to blank astonishment. For her brown eyes were feverishly and angrily bright, her usually soft color was harsh and heightened. Fiercely, and without preliminaries, she demanded to know what sort of perfume I used. I disclaimed the use of perfume, and she shot a malevolently suspicious glance at me.

"None at all?" she insisted.

"Really, Mrs. Carlton," I replied, as crushingly civil as I could be, "I cannot fathom your interest in the matter, but I certainly do not use any perfume. There are bags of dried lavender flowers in my linen drawers, but that is the extent, the utmost extent, to which I go in perfumes."

She made some sort of a disjointed apology to me, and flung out of the studio without further parley. The Lime Regis Arms is not so monumentally constructed that I did not hear the sharp twang of my next-door neighbor's bell as Mrs. Carlton left me, and I inferred that she was pursuing her investigations into the intimacies of the other ladies' toilets.

By evening I knew this for a fact. She had visited us all, except Mrs. Dwight, and had frantically demanded of us all, as she had of me, the name of our favorite perfume. From each apartment she had been forced to retreat in some disorder, for none of us, it seemed, used the sort of scent for which she was searching.

And it was not until Edward enlightened me—how he discovered the truth I'm sure I don't know, but I have often noticed that men, for all their professed superiority to gossip, are able to supply the keys to the mysteries of tittle-tattle—it was not until Edward enlightened me that I learned the reason of her outburst of curiosity.

It seemed that there had been an hour's unaccounted-for hiatus between the close of the theater the night before and Mr. Carlton's return to his abode; and that—damning fact!—when he had returned he had borne about him a strong odor of heliotrope. Mrs. Carlton was ready—eager even, it appeared—to believe that he had spent the missing hour in the society of some lady addicted to that sweetly smothering perfume. And his assurance that he had merely sat in a crowded subway train, stalled for a disciplinary hour between stations, next a woman who fairly reeked of the scent, went for nothing with her.

"And yet," said Edward, with an unsympathetic grin, "he told her the truth—it was the same train that Bosworth and I took up from the club. Outrageous of Mrs. Carlton, and abominably



I think that he kissed Laura Gray's hand that time!

vulgar? I dare say. So many of our primitive intuitions lead us into vulgarity."

After that 'all of us—us women, I mean—sympathized more than ever with Tom Carlton, and even the men agreed that his life could scarcely be a placid one. Still they insisted, with the certainty of men who had been particularly fortunate in the selection of non-jealous wives, that Mrs. Carlton could never have developed this insane and virulent jealousy without "something to start her off."

As for Tom, he, of course, made a good bit of sentimental capital out of the incident. He never referred to it—he did have good manners, even his critical fellow men allowed him that. But somehow he succeeded in combining with his well-dressed, well-fed, cordial

air a little look of the man whose wife isn't fair to him. There was just a little touch of weariness, just a little touch of disdain about his fine features, which reminded us, when we saw him, that there were conditions in his life to make him a trifle weary and disgusted.

As for her, she was rather pitifully subdued for a week or so, and watched him with appeal in her brown eyes, and wore her most becoming gowns for him, and consulted his wishes with the humblest deference. And there was something about the very way in which he avoided the rest of us, in which he refrained from paying us the flattering, harmless, little attentions which he had been in the habit of bestowing upon us, that proclaimed to all who witnessed it, that he was a misunderstood and persecuted man.

The night at the bridge club, when he, although dummy, and wandering restlessly around the room in his interval of idleness, failed to pick up Mrs. Dwight's ball of worsted—Mrs. Dwight used to attend our L. R. A. festivities like a sort of palpable benediction—brought things to a crisis. Mrs. Carlton, whose eyes were divided between him and her cards, saw and gave a little gasp of remembrance.

"Oh, Tom!" she murmured. "Mrs. Dwight's knitting!"

Tom gave his wife a brief, meaningful look.

"May I?" he asked her, in a low tone, and she flushed to the roots of her soft, fine-spun, dark hair.

It seemed to me that there were quick tears in her eyes as she turned them again to her cards. By that time Tom had availed himself of the permission implied in her gesture, and had restored Mrs. Dwight's pink wool to her black-silk lap, and was giving a capital imitation of a devoted adoptive son.

Freed by his wife's open penitence for past false judgments from the restraints he had put upon his intercourse with the ladies of the Lime Regis Arms, Mr. Carlton had a very congenial evening. When the final rubber had been lost and won, he circulated among us more freely than since the episode of the

heliotrope perfume. He talked to me about tramping in Germany, he told Amy Leffenwell just how long it had taken Shakespeare to "land" "Hamlet," or Sheridan to place "The Rivals," or Eugene Walter to dispose of "Paid in Full"—or some other equally celebrated playwright of ancient or modern times to win a favorable hearing from the world.

He let poor Mrs. Gray tell him about the wonderful thing that a medium had known about the little lost baby.

"Oh, you don't know what it means to be able to speak to any one of it!" the poor soul cried, back of the Goldsboroughs' big Japanese screen. "For Fred won't let me mention it, and says I must never go again. But you understand so!"

"Why shouldn't I?" replied Tom Carlton, in the grave, kind, steady voice of his. "Why shouldn't I? Have I lived to be as old as I am without ever suffering a loss, and wandering darkly for consolation? Do I think my little pocket rule measures the universe? All the same, dear Mrs. Gray, Fred is right. You're so impressionable, so delicately strung, that it's bad for you—the excitement of these séances."

And I think—I was in an angle of the screen with Mr. Goldsborough, mixing the salad dressing—I think that he kissed Laura Gray's hand that time! I know that he kissed Mrs. Dwight's, quite openly and gallantly, when he told her good night, after having tenderly submitted to a long lecture from her on the care of his invaluable health, and a stern catechizing in regard to the weight of his winter underwear.

And in spite of her evidently heroic resolution not to be "nasty," Florence Carlton grew more and more uneasy as her husband grew easier and easier in his dispensing of small attentions to the feminine half of the bridge club.

After Florence's mother had come from her home in Ohio to pay Florence a little visit, I think that we all understood the younger woman better than we had done before, and that we all sympathized more than ever with Tom Carlton. Mrs. Willoughby was the most

exacting old lady it has ever been my lot to meet, and in spite of the pious fiction that all old ladies are saints, I have met a good many who were something of a strain upon the forbearance of their relatives. She would have been a pretty old lady, except for the expression of peevishness which marred her finely cut old features. She declared instant war upon our dear Mrs. Dwight, and within three days Tom Carlton would no more have dared to kiss Mrs. Dwight's hand than he would have dared to offer an impassioned salute to Mrs. Laight, whose youth and good looks would have made an impassioned salute quite out of the question.

During the fortnight of Mrs. Wiloughby's stay we all fell into the habit of thinking up courtesies for her, not because we wanted to, but because she calmly exacted it, and, after all, we did like the Carltons. We went into their apartment with set smiles of admiration and friendliness on our hypocritical faces, and left reluctant bunches of flowers for her; she had so lamented her glassed-in piazza at home, and its blooms. We took her to concerts, buying, of course, orchestra seats—ourselves accustomed to climbing to the plebeian galleries—and arranging her scarfs and wraps so that the lightest breath of wind might not blow harshly against her; at vast expense we took her to gay and glittering tea rooms, and having ordered the rarest viands prepared by these hostelries, were mortified to have her lament the impossibility of obtaining a good cup of tea anywhere out of Sandusky, Ohio. We mended our manners at her dictation; we repressed our opinions, and echoed hers. She was simply one of those commanding, demanding old ladies who coerce you into making them the center of the universe for the time being. She was spoiled!

The only person who stood out against her at all was Florence, her daughter; it is ugly to record it, but they quarreled quite openly after the first twenty-four hours. Mrs. Wiloughby told us, with regretful candor,

that Florence resembled her father's people in looks, temper, and disposition. Florence confided to a few of us that dear mamma always had been spoiled; papa had adored her, and had waited upon her hand and foot, and she expected the same treatment from an indifferent world; and usually, by some hook or crook, received it. But she and Florence, as the latter stated, with bland contempt for the traditions of mutual mother-and-daughter love, had never "gotten on."

Of course not, we told one another; one small household was not large enough for two ladies who each exacted the best of all the family offering—an exclusive right to affection, attention, admiration, service.

Tom bore himself quite remarkably in the situation. He was all there was of affectionate, gay deference to his mother-in-law. When he entered the apartment, it was always for her that he called out; he always brought something that she wished to see or to possess, or that he pretended to believe that she wished. He suggested excursions for her until even her almost indefatigable appetite for pleasuring abroad palled; and then he was the most tenderly concerned son-in-law in the world.

Florence was almost as frankly jealous of all this as she had been of his small attentions to the rest of us—a circumstance which somehow seemed to make us even more blameless than before.

And by and by the two exacting and imperious natures clashed to such an extent that there was a hasty departure for Sandusky on the part of Mrs. Wiloughby, and Tom Carlton was quite busy for the next few days in comforting his wife for her mother's unkindness of speech, and in declaring that he had been the devoted son-in-law altogether for Florence's own sake, and not at all because it pleased him to be polite and deferential to every one in the world except his wife.

He came into our sitting room somewhat exhausted after one of these comforting and reassuring bouts with Florence, and asked Edward if he—Edward



And in rushed Amy Leffenwell, whiter than the white fox loa about her neck.

—did not consider that a woman might overwork the “when-I-am-dead-perhaps - you - will-remember-this-and-be-sorry” racquet! Edward, who has never had to contend against this particular manifestation of the feminine instinct for self-torment—and torment, I suppose, of the second party to the conversation—said stupidly that he didn’t know what Tom meant.

Tom smiled, looked across at me, where I sat with my mending, and said whimsically, yet earnestly:

“Woolson, you don’t realize half how blessed you are! When a married man is not familiar with that prophecy—threat—whatever it may be, he should go down on his knees and give thanks—to Heaven and his wife!”

“Caddish,” said Edward to me afterward, “to criticize his wife!”

“He never even mentioned her,” I replied hypocritically, I admit.

“Bosh!” said my husband energetically. “You know as well as I do whom he meant. And I dare say he *would*

feel sorry for all his faults against her, if she should—er—die, you know.”

Edward dislikes a free reference to the ultimate facts of existence.

“Stuff and nonsense!” I retorted in my turn. “The ones who hold up the fear of after-the-end remorse before their erring husbands never die! They’re like the rejected lovers who declare that they’ll commit suicide or go to perdition, and merely go and propose to the next girl on the block. All talk! I haven’t a doubt that Mrs. Willoughby used to tell her husband he’d be sorry when she died—and she has survived him twenty-six years up to date.”

Edward resumed his paper; he loves quiet, and he early learned the way to obtain it in our household. I *do* like the last word! And I went on with my sewing, and with my inward reflections upon the queer ways men and women have of torturing each other and of tiring each other in this queer world in which we live; and I was just thinking, with a sense of superior wisdom, that

death very seldom came to enlighten darkness or to unravel tangles, when the old knocker on our door fell with a heavy, agitated bang, and before Mina could go to the door it was opened, and in rushed Amy Leffenwell, whiter than the white fox boa about her neck, mouth open, eyes distended with horror.

"Oh, oh, oh!" she moaned and screamed, casting herself upon me with the frantic abandon of a child who is fleeing from unimaginable terrors. "Oh, oh!"

Her husband came in before I could do anything but to tell Mina to bring me the brandy. He was white, and somewhat shaken out of his usual dignified port, also.

"What is it?" asked Edward.

It seemed that it was a Something which had hurtled by the window next the elevator shaft as the Leffenwells had stood awaiting the ascent of the car. Amy had screamed "It's a woman!" and had rushed to our door—the nearest one—and he had run downstairs, and had investigated. It was terrible—it was true. It was a woman—had been a woman. He paused, and we all looked at him solemnly, not daring to ask the name of the woman, and he stood staring back, not daring to pronounce it. By and by he wet his dry lips, and said stiffly:

"It was Mrs. Carlton."

Well—there it was. We all knew that she was subject to fits of faintness, although some of us had interpreted the faintness as mere temper, as mere efforts to draw to herself again her husband's momentarily withdrawn attention. Carlton testified that she had complained that day especially of giddiness and faintness; the sill of the window beside the elevator shaft was rather low. It was absurd to suppose that it was anything except an accident. If the poor creature had wanted to—to make way with herself, to offer a supreme bid for supreme importance in Carlton's thoughts, was it conceivable that she would choose a way so hideous, so uncertain—she might have been only maimed and mangled!—so atrocious? Was it reasonable that she would have

dressed herself for the street, adjusting her veil, fastening the buttons of her gloves, putting a shopping memorandum in her bag?

Of course not! It was palpably a horrible accident. Dressing to go out in the late afternoon, she had gone to the window for a breath of air while she waited for the elevator. It satisfied the coroner—it satisfied the newspapers—it even convinced us. Poor, tormented soul, and nerve-racked body! We women in the Lime Regis Arms looked at one another askance those days. We knew all of one another's spoken and unspoken criticisms of the dead woman in the past, and we judged one another harshly. Was there no charity in the world?

Carlton went away for a while, and when he came back there was a chastened air about him. It was, of course, partly due to the shock and sorrow—he really cared for Florence, in his way—but we soon found another reason for it.

In his new rôle of the bereaved husband he had come in for a cup of tea one afternoon. I don't mean to be disagreeable about him—he *was* a bereaved husband! No man could live through such an experience and not feel it, especially a man kind, soft-hearted, easy-going. He *was* a bereaved husband.

But I found myself criticizing him because he knew so well that he was a bereaved husband—he was so articulate about it all, even when he was inarticulate, if you understand what I mean. I pictured the dumb, uncomprehending sorrow of my Edward, should such a tragedy overtake him—he wouldn't understand his grief so well! However, I suppose that that is neither here nor there. He—Tom Carlton—was quite capable of an understanding self-pity, and I know that that doesn't prove him not to have been really torn with grief. But it was interesting to see how much less all of us felt for him now that he had a real trouble, a terrific burden of recollection and of loss to bear, than when he merely had an exacting wife. Florence took away one of his sympathetic assets that day she jumped—fell—from that window.

I am wandering again. Edward says that my conversational and my literary styles remind him of going to walk with the terriers—they can never keep after one thing until they get it. They dart after a woodchuck only to be lured off by a scampering chipmunk, and they abandon that to chase a chicken in a farmyard, and that to pick a quarrel with an unknown dog.

"Mrs. Willoughby is coming to pay me a long, long visit," announced Tom Carlton, handing back his empty cup. "No, no more, thank you. A long visit."

I could not decide whether the situation required congratulations or condolences. So I said weakly:

"Does she—how does she bear it?"

"Bravely," said Carlton, sighing, and then remembering to be brave himself, and straightening up. "Bravely. But Florence was all she had in the world—as she was all that I had!"

He fell into a sad fit of musing.

"It is so terrible for old people," I murmured conventionally. "After all, life may hold something for the young—work—friends—but for the old—"

"Ah, yes!" sighed Carlton. "That is why I want her to be with me. Florence was all she had in the world."

I forbore to mention that she had always seemed to get on perfectly well without Florence.

Well, she came—and she was a poor, crushed, garrulous, old lady. I don't know what death does to people, what delusions it gives the survivors, or whether the delusions are merciful or not. But she came, that poor, broken, crushed, old lady. And she wrung our hearts with pity as she told us of the love that had always subsisted between her and her daughter who was gone. And she wrung them afresh when she told us how perfect had been the union between Tom and Florence.

If he dared to smile at anything amusing, she would whisper:

"Poor boy! He tries to bear up. But he will never be the same again. He adored her. I remember when he asked me for her—my only child!"

And then she would relate incidents of that occasion. Oh, it was pitiful!

But it was humorous, too. She sublet her house in Sandusky, Ohio—glassed-in piazza and all—and she stayed with Tom Carlton to be a comfort to him. Her eyes, jealous now for the daughter who was gone, developed abnormal powers of detecting Tom's glances, his little courtesies. She never failed to settle down upon the recipient of these attentions with anecdotes of Tom's phenomenal devotion to his wife. It was vastly more impossible to escape Florence now than it had been when she was present in the flesh.

The wonderful thing about it all was that it did not seem to make Tom anxious to be rid of his mother-in-law. Instead, he played the dutiful, tender son to perfection; he wore, for her eyes, at any rate, the air of the man set apart from the world by sorrow.

And gradually he came to wear it for all of us. More and more nooks and corners of the apartment were left "as they were when my wife was alive." New pictures of her began to spring up here and there. Always when it was horticulturally possible were there lilies of the valley in a bronze bowl on the stone mantelshelf in the studio; they were Florence's favorite flowers, we were given to understand. And so on and so on. Even the exacting Florence, I think, would have been satisfied with the devotion lavished upon her after she had gone.

The others marvel at Carlton. But it seems to me that I have discovered the secret of him. He always likes to be what is expected of him; he has no indestructible self of his own—he is the reflection of other people's idea of him. He was the understanding, half-gallant, half-friendly acquaintance to us women because that was what we wanted, I suppose, what we were looking for. He was to Florence the gay, elusive, amorous creature whom her own jealousy created. And now he is what his mother-in-law firmly insists upon his being—a grief-stricken, one-love-in-one-life sort of a bereaved husband.

I am interested in Carlton. I am wondering what the next dominant woman will make of him!



Target Practice

By Wallace Irwin

Illustrated by Hy. Mayer

IT was showery
On the Bowery.
Hank McGraw and Billy Mallory
Chanced to try, sir,
Skill of eye, sir,
In a little shooting gallery.

Pretty Nellie
Agnes Kelley
Bossed the show with brightest gull's eyes.
Bill, soft-hearted,
Sheep's eyes darted.
Hank continued shooting bull's-eyes.

Scarce a Davy
In the navy
Equaled Hank at bustin' targets;
Quite a stunner
Of a gunner,
He deserved the praise a star gets.

But poor Bill, sir,
Was a pill, sir,
In the line of target practice;
Aimed inanely,
Shot insanely.
Mind wa'ant on his work, the fact is.

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Aimed inanely,
Shot insanely.
Mind wa'ant on his work, the fact is.

But how flimsy
Woman's whimsy!
Nellie Kelley, young and silly,
Hank's high scoring
Quite ignoring,
Only saw the aimless Billy.

Henry, stopping,
Tired of popping,
At the gallery of Kelley,
All too late was;
For his mate was
Making all the hits with Nellie.

"I'll be flabbered!"
Henry jabbered.
"Easy shots Bill often misses;
Yet I never
Scarcely ever
Seen the way he lands the kisses!"

In the solemn
Marriage column
Papers printed "Kelley-Mallory."
Cupid hatches
Just such matches
In his little shooting gallery.





FUGITIVES FROM EDEN

IZOLA
FORRESTER

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

CHAPTER I.

BUT listen, Slim! I'm the one that's marrying him, and I've got to live with him, and if I'm satisfied to take the risk, is it any of this old town's business?"

"It's been a good town to you. I'm only making one last appeal to you, Plainey."

"Don't you call me that any more, Slim MacPherson. I hate it."

"Do you now, Plainey?" Slim regarded her in mournful retrospection. "I always thought it suited you—kind of."

Plainey gave him one long glance through the ticket window, and went on sewing.

"Making wedding garments?" queried Slim, emerging from the ordeal of the fiery glance unscathed. "I never knew you could sew and make pretty, ruffy things, girl."

"Neither did I." Plainey bit off her thread a trifle viciously. "Love certainly ropes us in queer tangles, Slim."

"Love? You ain't in love, girl! You're infatuated. Now, don't get to

pawing the air, but listen to facts. I'm Larry's best friend in the entire and united State of Colorado. He knows it. And I know him better than I do my own father. Yes, I do. According to family history, the deceased parent stepped over the divide when I was about two and a half, Plainey. Which don't enter into this discussion, save as a general corroboration of statement."

Plainey glanced at the clock. "I wish you'd go away, Slim, and stop talking to me in business hours. It's three minutes to train time."

"I won't—not till I lift this load off my heartstrings. I like Larry. I'm willing to do anything on earth for him except encourage his getting you for a wife. It ain't a square deal. You've been the dove of peace in this town—a sort of angelic vigilance committee in one—and here he's swooping you away to his own selfish intents and purposes, leaving a devastated community of broken hearts. You're in the nature of a legacy to us, Plainey—a sort of reward for good behavior. You're not a native product. You were a godsend to us, girl, although we never knew why the

railroad company and an all-seeing Providence put you in charge of this desert station."

"You'd scared away four of the regular operators and shot one. They used to call Eden the Burial Ground up at Denver. Good name, wasn't it?"

"Too personal."

"It's just as good as Eden. Who named this lonesome, barren place that, Slim?"

"Some poor, crazy devil that had crawled here over the desert, hunting gold. When he got this far, he struck a placer lead, went strictly insane, and thought he'd found the Promised Land. Therefore—Eden we are."

"It's a funny name."

Plainey smiled musingly out of the dusty windowpane beside her. She could see up the long hill road that wound from the depot toward the hotel and main street of Eden. For over a year the town had been home to her, and she loved the view.

"It's very encouraging and inducive to settlement," responded Slim. "More tourists and prospective citizens tumble off these trains the minute they sight that name on the board out there than are ever caught by circulars. It's a balm and an ointment to the soul. It's a promissory note from Fortune to make good some day."

The telegraph instrument began to tick, and Plainey dropped her sewing to answer the call. Slim strolled over to the bench near the door, and took a drink of water out of the pail standing there. He was well named. If it had not been for a hundred and sixty pounds neatly distributed, his six foot two and a half would have seemed a handicap. As it was, he evened up well. In spite of his rebuff, he smiled at the slender frame at the desk.

There was a captivating charm about Slim's good nature. You could not break down its barricade with worry, trouble, or ordinary annoyances. Neither could you evade it, or crush it. He resembled a wandering seraph with a sense of humor showing in his eyes and the quirk of his mouth—a seraph

who found his earthly jaunt a merry one and pined not for the shining hosts.

When he stepped back to the ticket inclosure, the girl sat back from the desk with a puzzled look on her face.

"Slim, anybody named Justin Trelease here in Eden?"

"Not alive," replied Slim cheerfully. "Not with that for a handle."

"Here's a wire from Colorado Springs. No name given. Just asks if such a person is known here. Also asks that inquiry be passed along to chief of police. We haven't any such character here, have we, Slim?"

"Who? Chief of police? Not as per yet. Meeting the exigencies of the moment, and the gentle trust placed in our civic outfit by the Springs, I stand for election on the spot. What do they want? Our chief to go gunning for Justin?"

"Don't lean on my sewing, Slim, please. I don't know what they want. Perhaps Larry would know. He's been around more than you have, Slim."

"I'd like to know what that yeller-haired, walking tombstone ever did to inspire you with this touching confidence, Plainey. Yes, I mean to call you that. I like to see your eyes snap. To my certain knowledge, for two years he has roosted up at a shack in the hills, seventeen miles from here, without deviation from routine."

"But he's been around since."

"Since he discovered you. Plainey, you're getting prettier every day. How you can look at my side partner and close friend the whilst I hover round like a bilious bee is more than I can see. Plainey," after a silence fraught with tension, "are you sure going to be married to-night?"

"Sure!" said Plainey softly, bending over her sewing. "The company's sending the other operator down late to-night. Coming, Slim, aren't you?"

"As best man and chief mourner," rejoined Slim. "That's why you see me before you now. I've ridden miles, girl, to get here on time."

"For the wedding?"

"No. To meet the express."

"It won't stop here, Slim, to-night."

"Oh, yes, it will. There not being any store in Eden suited to his varied and fastidious tastes, Larry has betook himself up to town to buy you the usual sign of wedded bliss. Do you get me? The ring, child, the fatal ring! He—"

A low whistle shrieked through the cut in the mountains below Eden. Plainey dropped her sewing and went out of the depot, carrying the mail sack. She barely came to Slim's shoulder—a flower of a girl, brown-eyed, brown-haired, with a mouth like a dusky red rose of the South, and the touch of the sun overlying the clear, healthy tone of her skin. Slim took the sack from her, and reached the platform as the express swept round the curve.

More than one travel-bored face looked from the car window at the couple standing there on Eden's bare, narrow platform. They were both good to rest the eyes on; Slim, in his flannel shirt, knotted red silk handkerchief, high boots, and corduroys; the girl, attired very much the same, only that her skirt was of brown corduroy, and her waist of soft cream silk.

Plainey was smiling as she waved to the train crew for the last time, and each one hung out to get a good look at the bride-elect and catch the wave of her hand. Not a train passed through Eden without its crew watching for that gay, laughing face and waving hand.

"He isn't on board," she said, sweeping the length of the train with an eager glance. "Oh, yes, he is, Slim! No, it's a stranger."

The train started westward. Carrying a couple of suit cases, the man who had dropped from its steps farther down the tracks approached them. Plainey went back into the depot, but Slim waited to meet him. Strangers were rare at Eden. He felt like a reception committee as his keen, appraising eyes sized up the general cut and character of this unforeseen guest.

"Let me help you with one of those trunks," he suggested, when the traveler reached the end of the platform.

He was favored with a slow, delib-

erate glance from eyes as blue and cold as ice.

"You're very good. Thanks." Their owner swung one of the suit cases up to Slim, and presently they walked the length of the platform in silence. At the door of the depot the stranger paused and handed Slim a coin. "That will do, thanks," he said gravely.

Slim regarded the tip with amused wonderment, his hands in his pockets. Then his gaze went back to the impassive face of the giver, and something in his own eyes hardened.

"Better keep it, stranger. You may need it before you get away. We dig our own here in Eden, out of the hills yonder, where it grows."

"Ah!" He looked at Slim once more, this time with interest. "You live here in Eden?"

"Now and again I do. I balance between here and my own private restorium up in those mountains over your left shoulder."

"Do you know a man named Justin Trelease here?" asked the other abruptly.

"Why, Slim," called Plainey from the ticket window, "that's the same name they were asking about over the wire."

"No such person here; never was, to my knowledge, and I've ridden around Eden ever since it was discovered. What does he look like?"

"Wait; I have a photograph that you might recognize."

He stooped over one of the suit cases, opened it, and, after a moment of rummaging, held up a small photograph and gave it to the operator.

Outside on the platform came footsteps, but they were unnoticed. Plainey's face was a study as she bent over the picture. It was the head of a young man, a clever study in Rembrandt tones, and sharply contrasted light and shade.

"Have you ever seen such a person?"

She drew in one deep breath, smiled, and looked up, handing back the picture.

"No, I never have," she said clearly. "I am sorry I cannot help you."

Some swift, intuitive dread seemed



"Er—stranger," whispered Slim, on the side, "don't tip him if your friends expect you back to London."

to crush her heart as she spoke. The stranger smiled.

"Strange. I know positively he has made this town his home for some time. He was interested in the Buckeye Mines."

"We hadn't realized as we had any famous citizens," said Slim.

"Fame is a curious thing. May I send a message from here?"

In silence, Plainey handed him a blank. He wrote several words on it, and gave it back. She read it quickly, eagerly, as he turned again to Slim. It was directed to Major George Fenway, Eagle View Hotel, Goldtip, Colorado.

Not here. Will join you Friday.

TRELEASE.

As the click of the instrument sounded, through the open doorway came Larry Hargrave, Eden's favorite son. He was nearly as tall as Slim, but heavier built, a tanned, fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon, transplanted to the

mountains of Colorado. Not over thirty, he looked older. There were lines about his close mouth and eyes that time had not handed to him. But they were good eyes—eyes unswerving in their gaze, and fearless—gray in color, and heavy-lidded. Just now they stared fixedly at the stranger, and the lines about the clean-cut jaw grew taut and resolute.

"This is my partner, Larry Hargrave, stranger," said Slim easily. "I think he can tell you about your man. He's better posted than the rest of us, and he reads the papers."

"It is a good habit," rejoined the stranger smilingly. "My name

is Trelease. I am from London."

Plainey sat at the telegraph desk, her hand gripping its edge convulsively as she listened; but Larry's voice never varied from its customary easy tone.

"I saw Mr. Trelease on the train. We will try to welcome you to Eden, sir."

"Er—stranger," whispered Slim, on the side, "don't tip him if your friends expect you back to London."

"Thanks. I will remember," Trelease returned gravely. He turned again to Larry, whose eyes sought the slender, lonely figure of the girl with reassuring tenderness.

"Would it be imposing on you, Mr. Hargrave, if I asked you to direct me to the hotel? I should like very much to talk with you and ask your advice." He looked back at the telegraph operator. "Er—you need not send that message."

"Very well," she returned anxiously. "Larry, you won't be long?"

He smiled back at her.

"Slim will stay here until I get back," he replied. "Now, Mr. Trelease, if you are ready."

Plaine watched them leave the depot and start up the hill road in the old bus that still did service between the hotel and the depot. Then she laid her head on the desk and broke into unrestrained sobbing.

"Don't talk to me!" she gasped, as Slim tried to soothe her. "How could you let him take Larry? There's something terribly, horribly wrong, Slim. That picture he showed me is Larry! Now do you know how I feel? And here Colorado Springs has wired to our police to find Justin Trelease. Slim, Slim, what is it?"

"I wouldn't tear my hair and hit the ceiling, Plaine," said Slim gently, running one hand through his own thick, close curls. "Larry didn't look much disconcerted. And he came up on the same train, so he knew what faced him. That fellow didn't even look like an Eastern sheriff, nor detective, neither, and Larry's not dodging any old scores."

Plaine laughed nervously, and read over the message again.

"Slim," she said recklessly, reseating herself at the desk, "this is the last message I shall send from Eden, and it's a mistake, Slim—a bad mistake on the operator's part—for it has been recalled. But it's going out to Goldtip now, just the same."

Ten minutes later Larry faced the stranger in a room at Eden's main hostelry, his face white under its coat of tan, his eyes merely high lights between narrowed lids. He threw himself into a chair and looked at the man opposite.

"What the devil do you want with me?" he demanded. "By God, you take chances!"

"Don't be so nasty, Just," rejoined the other. He went back and shut the door, locking it. Then at last he took the chair opposite, and said: "How soon can you get away?"

"Get away? I do not intend to get

away," swung back Larry. "Why should I?"

"Shut that window, and don't talk so loudly, you silly ass. Be quiet, and hear me through."

CHAPTER II.

"I came ahead as your friend, Just, to warn you."

"Against what?"

"You have not gained in tact, have you? Against your own impulses, for one thing."

"You have not traveled from London to Eden to tell me that."

"Perhaps I have, as, say, family emissary, to protect others against the consequences of your—shall we call them impulses?"

"They would not select you for such a mission."

"And why not? By selecting me instead of a more important scion, they avoid suspicion. You're not very hospitable, Just, I must say, after a chap has been on the road for days. I want food and rest."

"You'll have both when I'm through with you," retorted the other. "Why have you come to me, with smooth words on your lips and hell in your eyes?"

"Lord Rawling sent me with this word to you: Move on! Do you understand? I came on the same steamer with Lady Guen. She has found you, and was determined to follow. The major is with her, and between them they mean to get you back. If you go, the whole affair will rise from the dead and dance before the world in its shroud. You know what it means, Just. You must lose yourself before they get here."

"Great God!" came from the other man's clenched teeth. "I am to be married to-night!"

"Really?" Trelease glanced up with a sharp look full of surprise and amusement. "You're a pretty boulder, to drag a woman into your game of life. Does she know?"

Larry shook his head and stared out of the nearest window toward the red

roof of the little, new depot. He did not resent the other's tone. His face looked gray and desperate.

"A girl from this place?"

"You saw her at the station."

Trelease whistled softly to himself.

"The little operator? What will the family do?"

"I do not care a hang what any of you do. You sent me adrift to work out my own destiny after one ghastly blunder, hoping to God that I would die for the honor of the family. And I have not died. I am alive, stronger than I ever have been. I have taken root in these mountains and grown with them. I mean to stay here; I mean to marry Miss Bristow to-night, and I shall do it, if I have to call on the old lawless element here to hold back those who would prevent me."

"Marry her—who objects?" laughed Trelease. "My dear boy, we do not care whom you marry in this God-forsaken land. At least, Lord Rawling and myself do not. All we care about is for you to remain officially and technically deceased."

After a moment's silence, Larry lifted his head and looked the other in the eyes.

"How is Bat?"

For the first time, Trelease wavered and hesitated. His voice sounded unnecessarily flippant when he answered:

"As usual. He is fate's private jest at the house of Trelease. While you and myself range the outer walls, Just, your hunchback cub of an elder brother holds down Radsleigh and the title."

"Damn you, hold your peace!" swung back Larry hotly. "You may say what you please of me. I have not been a careful guardian of either my good name or honor, but poor old Bat has done nothing in the sight of God or man or the devil, save standing in your way so far as the succession goes."

"Justin, you allow your bitterness to run away with your logic. Not in my way. I am a totally disinterested spectator of the family disruption."

"Then why are you here? I know you well enough to be certain it is in

no good cause. How did you locate me?"

"You wrote to Guen from Eden, Colorado. For your own good, and the honor of the family, I was sent on by Lord Rawling to get you out of the way before Guen arrived. You happen to be our only animated skeleton, and we do not look forward to the prospect of your resurrection with equable good humor or tolerance. I think myself it's a damned impertinence—your remaining alive at all. A Jap would have gracefully committed hara-kari long since."

"But we are not as they who have no hope," quoted Larry, with almost tragic whimsicality. "I dare to live in spite of your cousinly suggestion. Have you any more?"

"Yes. Leave this town now, before Guen reaches it. She will accept the inevitable, and go back."

"And if I refuse to run like a renegade at your warning?"

"My dear boy, you know the result as well as I can tell you. You are wanted in England for murder. That's the bald truth. The disgrace and sorrow of the revived scandal would kill your mother. The affair was an accident—so you say—but even to us who witnessed it, it looked bad for you. You were an ass to write Guen."

"I'll wager she did not tell you of it," retorted Larry.

Trelease smiled slightly.

"Time is the most erratic juggler of all, lad. Guen and myself are more than cousins, I fancy."

"Leave Guen out of it, if you please."

"But why? The entire issue remains the same. I swear to you that she will be here within twenty-four hours, and with her the major. They are after you, and it means going back to England and facing the whole show up. Even if you do not care a rap for your own reputation, you might at least consider the rest of us."

"Is that the message you bring me from Bat and mother?"

"From your uncle, Lord Rawling," corrected the other mildly.

"What about Guen?"

"I will wire her, tell her you have gone south into Mexico, north to Oregon, are dead and buried—anything to send her back. What shall I say to your fiancée?"

"I will tell her what I may after we are married."

Trelease turned incredulously.

"You surely won't continue this farce of marriage!"

"Farce?" Larry laughed shortly and went to the locked door. "To make certain there is no trouble ahead, I am going now from this room to arrange for an immediate wedding."

"To-night?" For the first time, the other man lost his nerve. "God, Just, think! What right have you to place your burden of destiny on that girl's innocent shoulders?"

"She is my mate," returned Larry doggedly. "We will find some place to live where nothing can reach us."

"Possibly so. You two may escape. But what of others?"

"You mean?"

"I mean your son. Suppose she bore you one. Would he thank you for his inheritance?"

Larry's face hardened. White, compressed lines showed about his mouth.

"He would never know."

"Whether he knew or not, the taint of heredity would course through his veins."

"Taint be damned! I'm not a murderer," exclaimed Larry desperately. "Any man would have been tempted as I was. I did not intend to kill Sir George. Even here, exiled and cut off from everything I valued and loved, I know in my heart I should act the same under the same circumstances."

"So might a son of yours, born with that same fire in his blood."

"I think he would," responded Larry, a sudden gleam of contemptuous comparison in his eyes. "You are very solicitous for posterity all at once, Wilbur. What are you afraid of? My blocking your way to the succession? You want me out of the way—I know it. When Bat dies, you stand next to myself—you and uncle. Then listen here: I am dead. Do you understand?"

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I won't come to life to trouble the family. But see here, Wilbur, I face my own fate out here, and stand or fall as God wills, not you."

"Suppose I tell the girl you mean to marry what you are?"

"You won't," said Larry meaningly. "I've given you my word not to return, and all I ask is to be left here alone."

"In Eden," grinned back the other.

"It has been Eden to me, and I've found the mate here that I want. Nobody knows me save as Laurence Hargrave, my middle name. You keep your lips shut, and steer Guen and Uncle George away. Go back to England, and swear you found my grave, if you like. Do anything but interfere with my present way of living. That is fair, is it not?"

"You say that now in desperation. A man does not give up his entire birthright at a moment's notice. You would repent after this honeymoon was over. You remember, you gave me your word of honor when you sailed that you would never try to communicate with the family again, and yet you wrote to Guen a month ago."

"I didn't! I sent her mining securities to pay back money she advanced me in the old wild days."

"So you borrowed from even her?"

"God, you're the same little fiend, aren't you?" Larry's repressed tone was ominous. "Remember how you used to devil me into rages when I was a lad and you six years older? Then, when we were caught fighting, you would blame it on me. I'd like to get you out in a fair fight now."

Trelease rose nervously.

"Don't get nasty, Justin. Do as you like. The marriage is more a question of caste, don't you know. After all, you are yourself, and this girl seems to be just a little Western nobody."

He got no further. Larry swung round the table, and followed as his cousin backed into the corner from him. Swiftly, accurately, Larry's blows beat through the other's guard and took full revenge for the insult. He was in prime condition, fresh and fit after years in

the mountains, while Trelease was soft and heavy with city ease.

"Curse you!" gasped the latter. "Let up, can't you?"

"Take it back?"

"Yes. Let go your hold!"

"Then apologize."

"I—I apologize, Just."

There came a knocking at the door, heavy and imperative. Larry stood back, breathing heavily, eyes alight with excitement, his muscles taut and ready. Trelease instinctively straightened his cuffs.

"Well?"

"It's me, Larry," called Slim's voice.

"I'm coming now." Larry turned to the figure against the wall. "Don't forget. If you breathe a word of my affairs around Eden, I will have you bound on a pack mule, take you with me on my wedding trip, and leave you in the wilderness."

"I didn't know you had any bally wildernesses here, Just." The retort was not jaunty. It was distinctly plaintive.

"Didn't you? Think it over. I'm going to be married. By midnight I will be out of Eden, and I defy you, Lord Rawling, or any other fool who imagines himself God's flaming sword of vengeance to find me."

CHAPTER III.

"I couldn't keep her back a minute longer," Slim explained, as they swung down a side street from the hotel and made for the outskirts of Eden. "She wouldn't stay at the depot another second, and so I offered to chase you up."

"Where is she?"

"Down at Ma Wibberly's. Stirred up and madder than a lady hornet. Scared to death for fear you'd be sliced or shot up. I'd tell her all I reasonably could, boy. Women are shifted-minded individuals. Take it direct from your old Uncle Peter, there's nothing on earth makes them so altogether peevish as restricted information on facts. If you can't tell them the whole truth, then start and weave the fairest and most sensible deviation you can, and get away

with it. But don't shut up. There's nothing the sex objects to like a shut mouth. They don't understand it. Tell her something tasty like to ease her mind."

Larry smiled, close-lipped and amused. It had been Slim's airy persiflage, as Eden called his line of talk, that first drew him to the ranger. Beneath its rambling irrelevance there lay shrewd, farsighted wisdom, he knew, and a keen knowledge of human nature.

"Stand by sure to-night, Slim," he said. "I need you."

Slim grinned, dropping one eyelid until it lay close shut, while its mate regarded life with indifferent hauteur. It was what Slim regarded as his most acute mannerism, and gave him the appearance of a most senile and knowing parrot.

"I'm the best man, ain't I? Doesn't that convey all special privileges? You give your orders."

"See that this fellow Trelease is kept quiet until I am out of the way."

"He shall forthwith be made to forget his own idiotic and blasted existence," smiled back Slim cheerily. "But what has this drift of London smoke got on you, pal?"

"He is my cousin," Larry returned, with grim brevity. "Our opinions of each other agree perfectly. He would like to act as chief mourner at my funeral to-morrow, Slim, if fate were kind enough. I am the sable lamb of the family, officially dead. I am almost inclined to agree with them it would be better if I were."

"Nice sentiment for a party on his wedding eve! Are you in bad—I mean, as bad as all that? To-morrow's another day. Why, look yonder, boy! She's waiting there for you, you old, worthless prodigal! Isn't she a picture? And she might have married me, just by lifting her little finger and crooking it a bit."

Larry hurried ahead to where Plainey awaited him on the newly painted porch of the Wibberly shack. The latter owed its embellishment entirely to Mrs. Wibberly. Morning-glory vines and wild cucumber clambered thickly over its

boards, and neatly imbedded in the leaves was a small sign that suggested to the passing world "Rooms for Rent." Here Plainey had taken up her dwelling nearly a year before, when she had first appeared on Eden's heaven-kissing hills and taken the place of the lately deceased telegraph operator. And in it she waited for Larry now.

The shack was painted yellow. Eden inclined toward yellow, whether from a subconscious leaning toward its psychic message, or because it reminded the town of a lucky strike, who can say? It surely favored yellow paint, and the Wibberly shack looked like a Yogi retreat in its golden glow.

"I was afraid that something might go wrong," she said, as Larry sprang up the steps to her side and took her hands in his close grip. "I just had to send Slim after you, to be sure you were all right."

"The which interesting and superfluous character will immediately merge his identity with the adjacent environment. Fare ye well, my bonny, bonny crew," sang Slim.

"One moment, Slim. Is there any way at all that we could have the marriage take place quietly, and without the crowd knowing of the get-away?"

"Listen to the infant!" Slim appealed to the sunset sky. "Cohorts and legions of faithful friends and well-wishers await the auspicious hour. And this welsher wants to cut it out and dodge the issue! Larry, you might be accused of adipose tissue in the cerebellum. It can't be did, to be exact."

Larry's gaze rested keenly on the little town. Gleams of light were already beginning to show in the windows, where the glass caught the vivid swaths of crimson in the sky. It had been a good town to him, a haven during the loneliest years of his life. Sometimes he felt as if Eden had been the crucible wherein his own character had been melted and reformed, free from baser influences. He had come to these mountains raw and smarting from wounds

given ruthlessly to pride and love, hating his exile, hating his own life, and, most of all, the influences back home that had forced this upon him. Yet somehow, up at his solitary log shack in the mountains, he had found peace and contentment, especially after Slim MacPherson had joined him as partner and friend.

Slim's profession was that of forest ranger, a profession which he held to be peculiarly worthy, and he had led the exile into it. Months passed before he knew that Larry loved the girl down in Eden, and he never liked to recall the

telling of that love. They had sat down before their fire one night after supper, legs stretched out before the blaze, smoking and dreaming. Slim was trying to figure out in his slow, philosophical way how the devil he was ever going to break the glad tidings to his partner of his utter subjugation and serious intentions toward a certain party at Eden's depot, and lo! even while he ruminated and felt his neck growing warm beneath his collar, Larry had turned his head lazily, and told him that



Larry swung round the table, and followed as his cousin backed into the corner.

Plaine had promised him that day she would be his wife.

Slim rode alone that night under the stars, and nobody knew how he fought his angel for heart's rest. He found it somehow, and faced his world with the same broad grin of good-fellowship as before. Perhaps only Plaine guessed at what had lain behind his brown eyes, and she never let even Slim know that much.

But to-night she never looked Slim's way. Steadily, with infinite anxiety, she watched Larry's profile. Rather long it was, and sharply defined, compared with Slim's Scotch uplift, as he dubbed the round, boyish face with deep wrinkles at lips, and eyes turning upward. Larry's features were clearly English, straight and undeviating in type as the Greek, his head well set on square shoulders, jaw line strongly defined, mouth and chin strong in beauty and will. Two years of forest riding in all sorts of weather had given his skin a deep hue, not ruddy like Slim's, but toned dark like old ivory, a strange contrast to his blue eyes and fair, close-cut hair.

Feeling her gaze, he turned and smiled down at her.

"You hear what Slim says, girl dear. Have you the courage to go through this thing?"

"I will do anything to help you; but why must we go secretly?"

Slim's eyes telegraphed a hasty reiteration of his former advice, and Larry accepted the hint.

"I do not want any interference, dear, that is all," he replied gently. "Slim, you will get a pack horse from Jules the Canuck. Buy it outright, with a tent and outfit. Have it packed and loaded to-night. Get plenty of cartridges."

"Mine's a thirty-eight," said Plaine softly.

Larry's hand pressed hers. He knew she spoke as a mate should.

"My horse it at Jules' place," he added to Slim. "I left it there when I took the down train this morning. Get it and Plaine's pony. Have all three waiting at ten sharp here. Mother Wiberly will stand by us, and she's the

only one we will tell. Tell the crowd what you like, or say nothing at all; but keep Trelease a prisoner until morning, anyway."

"Which way are you going?"

"Don't ask me. Keep faith with us, Slim."

He stretched out one hand to the ranger. As the two gripped palms closely, Plaine gave a queer little sob and laid her face close against Larry's shoulder.

"What, dear—tell me, what it is?" he said.

Slim turned away and coughed.

"Nothing, nothing at all," Plaine said, when she could speak. She lifted a tear-wet face to his, and smiled gravely, her hands on his shoulders. "Only I wanted this to be the happiest time of my life; don't you understand, Larry? A girl always does. I wanted to wear white, and carry flowers, and now it's got to be corduroy and a runaway. And the air is full of something I can't grasp, this running away from something that I don't know anything about. I never knew you to run away from anything before, Larry. Why don't you tell me?"

Slim's cough grew worse. He choked and leaned heavily against the porch columns. For a minute there in the shadow of the vines, Larry drew the girl to him and held her close, his lips pressed against her cheek.

"Perfect love knows no fear, heart of mine," he whispered. "You must trust me."

"Oh, I do, I do!" she said quickly, insistently. "But tell me this much: Is it anything that I shall ever know?"

"Possibly. God forbid you should!"

He looked down into her eyes resolutely, yet with a certain wistfulness. He believed he was right in keeping his past life from her. It could not bring her happiness. It only spelled sorrow for her, and perhaps shame, as Trelease had insinuated. She seemed to him the very incarnation of his new life and hope in the new world. He could not let even the faintest shadow of his guilt touch the promise of the future.

"Then, if I knew now—what?"

"I should have to leave you and ride to-night alone."

She drew back quickly, trying to see his face in the dim light, repeating his words wonderingly, doubtfully, still with her hands on his shoulders.

"Leave me? Why?"

"Don't ask me. You must trust me—that is all. The only sin I may be committing love would condone. I have no right to ask you to go with me. God knows it is not a trail of roses, Plainey, we take together, dear."

Her voice was too low for Slim to catch the answer, but Larry heard it:

"It is not good for man to be alone, and—and I'm an awfully good cook, truly, Larry!"

"Did you say to order eatables?" asked Slim, suddenly emerging from the shadows. "Because you'd better get down to cases. It's getting along on the chronometer. I should suggest collapsible food of all kinds myself. How about dried beef and dissipated codfish, children?"

"Slim, this is not a joke——" began Plainey, with dignity.

"Great, leaping Moses! Who said it was?" Slim mopped his forehead nervously with the corners of his knotted handkerchief. "Here I'm best man, villain eradicator, and caterer for a pony-back honeymoon, and you call it a joke! Now, you'd better leave it all to me, and don't make suggestions, 'cause it makes me fussy. I'll provide the fodder for this trip, see, Larry? And a frying pan and coffeepot. You can't be too particular on the trail, Plainey, and you won't have any time for pink teas, or chafing-dish shindigs. It is seven now. At eight sharp the guests will begin to ride in. I shall forthwith go and purchase supplies for this get-away, then absent myself a while at the hotel. Somebody has got to sit on the stranger's chest until we know you are both far awa' beyond the moon-kissed ranges."

"Slim, I think it is downright cruel and heartless of you to act as if it were comical," protested Plainey severely.

"If I stopped for one instant to realize how tragic it was, girl, I'd shoot up

the whole blame town, myself included."

Slim smiled back at her, his eyelids narrowing as he spoke, and Plainey colored to her straight, dark brows, and was silent.

Slim never looked back at the couple. Up the hill street he swung with the easy, rolling gait of the man whose life was half spent in the saddle. At the corner of the main street, he stopped to light his pipe, push his hat farther back on his head, then sauntered down toward the general store kept by Jules the Canuck.

Jules was the trusted friend and well-wisher of any benighted and helpless homesteader or prospector desirous of outfitting from Eden. He kept anything from a pack mule to a tea strainer, and Slim remained with him for some time. When he left, the honeymoon was provided for, and Jules' expression had not changed one iota. He knew his business well; also, Slim MacPherson.

Thence strolled Slim back to the hotel, bent upon villain eradication. He stopped at the entrance to take a look over the way at what Eden loved to call its city hall. Here all public and important events took place. It had been one of Eden's first manifestations toward civic dignity. At present it was a one-storied wooden hall, with sunflowers hugging its timbers. Some day a majestic pile of granite was to rise on that site—some day, so Eden told itself proudly.

As Slim stood sizing up the wedding decorations, the hotel clerk sauntered out smilingly.

"Big night to-night, Slim."

"Sure is!" responded Slim buoyantly. "Look who we are."

"Then this marriage is actually going to take place?" remarked a slow, amused voice behind them, with a characteristic drawl that gave Slim's spinal column strange tremors. "Is the telegraph office open?"

Before Bud could answer, Slim dropped his left eyelid with grave intent.

"Until twelve," he answered. "I'll



"Know him?" gasped Tim. "Why, we've just been assisting at his obsequies——"

go down with you to make sure you don't miss the way."

And Bud stared thoughtfully after the strangely assorted pair as they started in the direction of the depot.

"I'll bet Slim chucks him in a box car for safe-keeping," he mused.

But nobody else in Eden noticed the removal of the stranger. And the telegraph office closed at six sharp.

CHAPTER IV.

At this point, Mrs. Wibberly picked up the woof of Clotho and did a little helpful spinning on her own account.

When Slim had departed, Plainey and Larry had sought the presence of Mrs. Wibberly, and told their troubles to her. All Eden went to her as its soul doctor and spiritual pharmacist, and she healed with a smile and a pat on the back.

"Well, all I can say is this," she said, looking lovingly from one to the other,

when they had finished: "I have a feeling for each of you. Didn't I cook the first batch of doughnuts ever saw the light of day here in town, and didn't you help to eat them, Larry? And you always paid your bills as you went, too, like a good lad, which is more than most of the devils can say that ate me out of house and home those days. So I have a feeling for you both, as I say, and if you want me to help in this skip-by-the-light-of-the-silvery-moon business, then I'm with you. Are you telling me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, Larry, s'elp you?"

"All that I have told you is the truth, Mother Wibberly," Larry replied steadily.

She laughed and shook her head at him, winking the while.

"Ah, get away with you, lad! Can't I see right through you? All that you've told me? Yes, and what haven't you told me? Tell me this much: Is it any-

thing that will bring sorrow or shame to this winsome girl?"

"We go to find another Eden of our own," said Larry. "And I swear to love and protect her while I live. Does that satisfy you?"

"It does not, for I see that you're prevaricating and wiggling out of something, and you're giving me an evasive answer, Larry Hargrave. Wait till I ask you a few straight questions." She faced him by the light of an oil lamp in her sitting room, while Plainey slipped away from them to prepare for the journey. "It isn't stealing, is it, lad? And by that I mean many things the world doesn't always give the plain name to, this money juggling out of other people's pockets."

"It is not that, Mother Wibberly."

"I'm hoping, then, 'tis no other woman, Larry, because I'll tell you now if there's a woman after you, she'll find you though you hide in the deepest shaft ever sunk in the Rockies. You can't hide from a woman when her cause is a just one. Sure, the angels in heaven do be helping her out on the quiet. If it's a woman you're fearing, I'll not lift a finger to help Plainey share such devilry."

"It's not a woman, Mother Wibberly."

"Then maybe you've only lost your temper and killed some devil that deserved it?"

She looked at him with anxious hopefulness. Of all broken laws, the most easily condoned in Eden's confines was justifiable homicide, and it held its own code of justification.

"Possibly," said Larry.

"Ah, she can share that with you all right enough. 'Tis the other two things that chew at a woman's heartstrings until they snap in two. I'll help you, lad, and God bless the two of you!"

Larry looked down at her standing resolutely before him, arms planted on her ample hips, double chin well set, blue eyes twinkling. He stooped, hat off, and kissed her cheek.

"I'll be good to Plainey," he promised.

There were still a few things he had to look after, and time grew brief. The wedding ceremony itself must be performed privately, he was determined. The mayor was also judge in the little, new town, and always officiated on such tender and interesting occasions; but Larry had managed his in his own way, and there arrived on the down train from the next town a clergyman of the Church of England. Quietly, while the town hall was filling with a joyous and somewhat exuberant crowd of enthusiastic guests, down in Mrs. Wibberly's sitting room, Dorothy Bristow, sometimes known as "Plainey," was joined in the holy bonds of matrimony to Justin Laurence Hargrave Trelease. Plainey did not even quiver her eyelashes when she heard the name read. The hand that Larry held in his was cold as stone, but she smiled up at him bravely when it was over, and he bent his head for the first kiss from the bride.

Outside there waited an honorary escort of Slim's friends. Just for a moment Plainey detained Larry, while the crowd called and shot off revolvers at the silent stars.

"Larry, I want to tell you something: That man wrote a telegram just before you met him at the depot, and then he told me not to send it."

"Well, dear?"

"I—I did send it. It only said you were not in Eden."

"I won't be by midnight," replied Larry happily, crushing her hands in his. "Come! We'll have one last glad old fling with the crowd before we ride into the unknown, sweetheart. Don't look so white. Are you afraid?"

"Just for you, Larry."

He pressed his lips to hers in silence, and they went out together, his eyes watching for some sign of Slim in the crowd. Not a word had he heard from him since they separated, Slim with his promise to keep Wilbur out of the way. He knew he had kept his word so far as the preparations for the flight were concerned. Jules had managed to convey that much reassurance to him. He knew, too, that neither was at the ho-

tel. Bud Fraser, the clerk, had told him that.

At nine-thirty, while the dancing and celebration were just beginning to get fully under way, there came the shrieking whistle of the express from Colorado Springs coming through the gap southward. It was to have been the signal between Slim and himself to get all ready for the flight.

Plaine was dancing with big Tim Boylan, Eden's only mayor. Tim had stated publicly in the beginning of things that he would be mayor so long as it pleased and entertained him, and Eden had permitted the indulgence. As they passed him, Larry caught her glance, and she knew the time had come for action. Then he left the hall.

"I'm a little bit faint," Plaine said, with her most appealing tone. "Have you seen Mrs. Wibberly anywhere, Tim?"

Tim promptly stopped, stood on a chair to obtain a better view of the assembly, and let out a hearty hail across the hall to where Mrs. Wibberly stood near the door.

"Will you be tiring her all out, Tim?" exclaimed that lady warmly. "Get away with you, and I'll give her some fresh air."

At the door, Plaine glanced back just once at the long, low-ceiled room, filled with the familiar faces she had grown to count as friends during the past year. They had all been good to her. That night they had tried to show her how much she was to them, and how they honored her choice. She wondered what they would say when they knew Larry and she had gone out into the night like fugitives.

"Now, don't you cry, dearie," Mrs. Wibberly exclaimed cheerfully. "Run and get into your riding suit, and be on your way as quick as you can. I'll keep the crowd guessing till you're fairly off. And listen!" She held the girl in her arms as a mother might. "If he isn't good to you, come back to Eden, and we'll open our hearts to you and fire anybody that's holding down your job. He seems to be all right, but you never can tell which way the male devils

will be jumping next. 'Tis their nature to be untidy, and all we can hope to do is love them, and pray for them, and do their mending regular."

She stood at the corner, watching Plaine hurry down to the yellow shack that had been home to her. The express was at the station now. From the hall came the sound of music—tantalizing, wooing waltz music—and the hum of voices. Now and then a pony, fastened to the iron railing in front of the place, whinnied gently to its mates. Once her ears caught a different sound—the rapid click of hoofs on the road down toward Jules' store. Larry was starting on his way.

The train pulled out as the old, rickety hotel bus rambled up the hill. Evidently it bore passengers, for the driver acted with a new regard for its safety. At the top of the hill it stopped short.

"You folks won't find anybody over at the hotel," the driver called down. "They're all at the wedding."

"Drive on, my good chap. We do not care to attend any wedding. There must be some one at a hotel to care for guests."

Even Mrs. Wibberly smiled placidly at the voice.

"Better stop at the hall first, Danny," she told the driver. "Bud's over there, all right."

When she reached the entrance herself, the music still played, but there was a curious hush over the assembly. Danny had obeyed instructions, and pulled up at the doors, and let out a shout for Bud, the clerk. But the guests alighted of their own volition.

First came an elderly, soldierly old fellow whom Eden straightway adopted as its own, without parley. Behind him was a girl—tall, and almost indistinguishable in her long gray traveling cloak and veiled hat. Last of all stepped out a middle-aged maid, of English make, and a beaming, red-faced lad bearing rugs and luggage.

The four-faced Eden's wedding guests, and the mayor shouldered his way forward to do the honors of the town.

"A most extraordinary place, my

dear," began the old gentleman, rather admiringly. "Next to nature—back to the Infinite! Reminds me slightly of the Tyrol."

The girl put back her long veil and surveyed the faces around her—mostly men, for Eden had not attracted many of the feminine persuasion so far.

"Is Mr. Wilbur Trelease here?" she asked, in a low, clear voice.

Bud moved nervously toward the background remembering Slim's drooping lid as he took possession of Mr. Wilbur Trelease's welfare pro tem.

"The name is not familiar," answered Tim genially. "But we have another party with the same latter cognomen, recently discovered." He reached into his vest pocket and drew forth Larry's wedding license and read the name in full—Justin Laurence Hargrave Trelease. "Known in public and among friends as plain Larry Hargrave," he added.

"Then you do know him, and he is here?" The girl's gloved hands closed nervously, but she was beautifully game and steady.

"Know him?" gasped Tim. "Why, we've just been assisting at his obsequies—no, hell! I mean his nuptials. Excuse me, lady. I'm undertaker here, too, as well as judge and mayor."

"I told you, my dear, that we would be too late, and that Wilbur would attend to everything."

"He appears to have done so," said the girl quietly. "Please let me manage now, uncle. Can any one here kindly direct us to Mr. Trelease; I mean, the man you call Larry Hargrave? He is my brother."

"Totally impossible, ma'am, and I'm sorry, too," returned Tim kindly. "But Larry and Plainey have departed suddenly from the center of the festivities, as it were. Speaking freely and generally, we all agreed they'd made a bee line for the hills, it being some ride up to Larry's place on Big Chemango, and honeymoon trails take time to travel."

"Then I must go after them. It is very, very important that we find my brother at once. Is there no guide we

could hire for the trip? It is not a question of expense. But I must follow them."

Nobody volunteered. Eden, to a man, respected a man's right to go where he liked on his bridal eve. Then suddenly, from the outskirts of the crowd, a curious and most undignified form appeared. It was Slim—Slim minus his hat, begrimed from a rough-and-tumble fight; but yet a dignified and pleasant-mannered Slim. He smiled down at the excited old gentleman, at the frowning maid, the red-faced youngster, and last of all into the deep blue eyes that questioned him mutely.

"I'll go with you, lady. I know every foot of land in these mountains, and Larry was my partner."

CHAPTER V.

Slim entered on his duties at once. Swiftly and delicately, he removed the party to the confines of Eden's one hostelry, where they would be safe from pertinent questions. At this critical juncture, Mr. MacPherson felt a curious aversion to all pertinent questions.

"I suppose some explanation is due you, if you are to take charge of us," the girl suggested. "This gentleman is Major George Fenwick, my uncle. You may call me Miss Trelease. What is your name, did you say?"

"I didn't say, ma'am," returned Slim gently; "but you may call me Slim. People out this way usually do."

"Thank you." Guen's tone was absent-minded. As yet her horizon did not even contain Mr. MacPherson's image or personality. "You understand what we want? Merely a guide who knows these mountain trails and roads to take us to my brother's residence."

"He hasn't any real abiding place, as you might call it, strictly speaking. He's been living off and on up in a log cabin on Big Chemango with another ranger. It isn't likely he'd take his bride there."

Slim's eyes were guileless and confident as a two-year-old's.

"But surely somebody knows which direction he has taken?"

"It's extraneously evident that nobody has the least idea where he is," corrected Slim gravely. "It's all straight goods, ma'am. He's just about dusted for the honeymoon trail."

"Probably heard that we would arrive by the ten-ten," put in the major. "Uncle George, do be cautious!" begged Guen. "Until we see Wilbur, we are absolutely in the dark."

"But where the devil is Wilbur?" ejaculated the major. "I'm sure I beg your pardon, my dear, but it's all so demnibly mismanaged. Here Wilbur states positively he knows nothing whatever of Justin's whereabouts, when we saw him in London two weeks ago. Very good. We accidentally find out that Justin is or has been in a place called Eden, located in the State of Colorado, U. S. A. Very good. Said Justin must be found at once, owing to certain surprising exigencies having risen—"

"Uncle George!"

"My dear, I will be circumspect, but I must speak, or I shall suffer heart pressure. We start for the States privately, telling nobody excepting your mother and Wilberforce & Wilberforce, solicitors. Yet here, in the State of Colorado, we meet your Cousin Wilbur face to face, and he tries in every possible way to dissuade us from going ahead. Guen, I don't like the look of it."

"It cannot matter what Wilbur says or does now. We will keep on until we find Justin," returned Guen gently. "He will return with us—"

"Now, maybe Plainey won't approve of that," put in Slim interestedly. "She's a very determined little party."

The major coughed testily, and turned to the tall fellow, whose presence he had forgotten for the moment.

"Now, my good chap—"

"Slim MacPherson, major," corrected Slim, in comradely fashion. "No use standing on these formalities if you and me are going to be trail mates. I'll be teaching you the diamond hitch before you're a day older."

Meeting Slim's half-closed, merry eyes, the major capitulated with good grace.

"No offense, I'm sure, MacPherson. Do we start at once? And what sort of outfit or conveyance does one procure for such a trip?"

"Better ride. Can you stand it for hours, perched on a Mexican saddle, Miss Trelease?"

"I can stand anything, so long as you bring us to where my brother is. Where can I get a riding suit at this time of night?"

"I'll take you to the mother of this whole town," answered Slim cheerily. "Mrs. Sue Wibberly, friend in need, and bully good cook."

"Thank you." Guen turned to the major. "We can leave our luggage here with Barnes and Cragie. We can't be bothered with servants on a trip like this, and I know I can manage."

"Gad, so can I! I was on a transport once during the Sepoy rebellion, and never saw my man for months. Did I ever tell you, my dear—"

"Oh, I think so, uncle."

Slim fancied the girl's eyes met his own appealingly. The major was called to the door by Bud at this point. For the minute they were alone, Slim had a light-headed feeling sweep over him. He had never seen such eyes before. Plainey's were soft and brown, and marvelously alluring; but these played such tunes up and down a fellow's heartstrings. They were clear as June skies, and blue as mountain violets. The lashes seemed to upcurl when she looked down. Slim could just see little curls of hair under her gray veil. Her words sounded far away. He did not catch the general details, only that somehow God had been pretty square in His latest deal to one Slim MacPherson, when He constituted him knight-errant to this girl.

"But you're sure we can find him?" were her last words.

"I'll do my best, ma'am," replied Slim huskily, but fervently. "I know every trail and crosscut in these hills, and I guess we'll catch up with them in a day or so. I'll do my best."



"You pick your pet names when you speak of men in this heathen land, do you see?"

"You said something about his being a forest ranger. I did not know he followed that profession." She drew off her gloves slowly, tiredly. "Then he is not really what you might call a— a desperate character?"

"Not since he married Plainey," amended Slim loyally. "He used to raise some dust, but nothing desperate, no, ma'am."

"Who is Plainey?" Again the blue eyes met his squarely.

"She's the young lady Larry married to-night. We call her that up here. It's kind of a nickname, you know, or a love pat. We call her Plainey because she's so almighty pretty."

"Oh!" That was all, but the subject of Plainey was closed tacitly then and there. After a pause: "Can we start soon?"

"Guen, my dear," exclaimed the major suddenly, "I learn some astonishing facts. Wilbur has been here to-night. His luggage is here now, but he himself has mysteriously vanished."

"I think, Miss Trelease, I'll go after

the horses," interjected Slim guardedly, making for the door.

"One moment, MacPherson. We may need your help. This gentleman is my other nephew."

"Perhaps he has gone after Justin, too, uncle," said Guen.

"Sure!" assented Slim heartily. "Now, as I said before, if this caravan's to move on soon, we'd better be hustling after supplies. I'll take you to Mrs. Wibberly, lady——"

"Lady Guenevere," corrected the major absently. "Quite so. Very sensible, MacPherson. We'll be on the road by daylight."

"Mr. Trelease, sir!" called Bud, sticking his head in at the door.

"Gad, which one?" gasped the major, wheeling about.

"Only myself," retorted Wilbur's surly, aggressive tones. "Unwelcome, as usual, yet necessary."

Bud vanished, and the trio faced Trelease. Not the serene, well-clad traveler of the early evening who had alighted in Eden so confidently. Even

Slim grinned appreciatively. Four hours in a freight car, securely bound, had not improved Wilbur's temper. His blood was up, and the glance he gave the assembly conveyed no friendliness.

"Gad, sir, this is most annoying," exclaimed the major, surveying him through his eyeglasses and stroking his gray imperial dubiously. "How did you get yourself into such a state, my boy?"

Wilbur met Slim's eyes. Their steady, mild gaze told nothing to the others present, but there must have been something discouraging about their expression as Mr. Trelease did not include their owner in his general explanations. He had secured a broncho to ride over to the nearest telegraph station, at the next town, and had been thrown. He was not injured badly, only jarred. Slim smiled.

"But, my dear chap, why the devil were you hunting for a telegraph station at this time of night?" began the major peevishly.

"Uncle George," warned Guen, "cannot you and Wilbur talk over matters in your own rooms, while I see this Mrs. Wibberly?"

"Have you met Mr. MacPherson, Wilbur?" asked the major. "Our guide."

"We met—this evening," Slim answered. "Got fairly well acquainted, too."

"I'm sorry I could not reach you by wire, Guen. I tried to stop you in time. Justin is not here. It's no use tracing him from this point. I've lost all track of him."

Guen smiled for the first time, and shook her head.

"It is no use, Wilbur. We are not going back East. I have engaged Mr. MacPherson to act as our guide, and we are going after Justin."

CHAPTER VI.

The wedding guests had dispersed when Slim showed Guen the way to Mrs. Wibberly's. It was nearly midnight. Guen hardly gave a thought to

the time or place. Every nerve tingled with excitement as she followed the tall ranger through the streets of Eden. Conventions and restrictions seemed to have been left behind her, on the west-bound express. She was eager and tense, thinking of the chase that lay ahead, and the near finish to her long quest.

They found Mrs. Wibberly still up, soothing her rampant nerves with a late cup of tea. Slim left the two together with an appreciative grin at the result. There was a look in Mother Wibberly's eyes that boded ill for this fair Britisher, who might be jeopardizing Plainey's happiness.

But strange are the ways of woman, and no man may hope to pierce the secrets of the order of united daughters of Eve. When he returned, half an hour later, there were tears on Mrs. Wibberly's cheeks, and she patted Guen on the shoulder and advised her to buck up her courage.

Slim sized up the changed appearance of the girl approvingly. She wore a riding suit of corduroy, gray flannel blouse, open at her throat, and an old gray felt hat. She seemed younger and more approachable. Slim looked from her to the moon, riding high in the August sky, and there seemed to be a beautiful similarity between the two.

"Everything is ready?" she asked, when they turned into the hotel entrance.

"All set. Hadn't you better turn in and steal a couple of hours' rest?"

He stopped short. Wilbur Trelease faced them, pale and nervous.

"Don't faint, or cut up, Guen. Uncle George is very ill. Had a seizure. Old heart trouble, I fancy. I've got the local doctor up with him, and will wire for specialists as soon as I can."

Guen's eyes were bright with anger. "What did you tell him to shock him? I know this is your doing."

"I told him nothing. He is badly broken up as it is, and you've rushed him to death."

"I don't believe you!" She leaned

forward, her hands gripping the back of a chair.

"Believe it or not, it's the truth. He's too ill to be moved for weeks. Cancel the order for the trip, MacPherson."

"Do nothing of the sort!" countermanded Guen, raising her head. "I don't believe you, Wilbur, and I shall go after Justin. I cannot do any good by staying with uncle, and I know he would urge me to go ahead himself."

"Would he? Alone?" Trelease met her eyes meaningly. "You are nervous and unstrung now, Guen. By daylight you will see the absurdity of the thing. Go and get some rest. I'll watch."

Bud's voice hailed him from the top of the stairs. The major had regained consciousness and seemed better. As Trelease sprang up the stairs in response, Guen's eyes met Slim's. Her face was almost colorless, her lips pressed firmly together.

"Let us go at once," she said, and Slim opened the door for her in silence.

"There wasn't time for any decent preparations," he told her, as they hurried down the street toward Jules' place. "But I've got a good mount for you, and some blankets and food. We can get more to-morrow at one of the ranches we pass."

Guen nodded her head impatiently. She could hardly wait to be away, now that the decisive step was taken. Her heart ached for the major, but his man was faithful, and Mrs. Wibberly would help, she was sure. The whole burden of responsibility had fallen on her shoulders, and she knew she must face the issue.

Slim showed her where the ponies were, and she waited while he roused Jules. Fifteen minutes later they were in the saddle, pushing out of Eden as fast as the fresh horses could take them.

"We'll follow the road toward Big Chemango," Slim remarked. "It's likely they went that way."

Guen murmured some commonplace. The whole affair was as unreal as a dream, this riding out at dawn into the

strange new world, with only this ranger by her side.

She hardly noticed when Slim spoke of the road or weather. Her mount was an easy one, and she found the Mexican saddle comfortable after the sort she was accustomed to. It took away responsibility. The keen morning breeze blew freshly in her face as they cantered over the log bridge at the creek and up the mountain road. She had not slept that night, yet she was not tired. After hours of travel on the overland train from New York, the riding was a relief. The whole frantic chase from London had left her tense and fearful of failure. Wilbur's actions puzzled her. Why had he followed them over? What reason could he have for seeking Justin? She sighed and lifted her face to the splendid mountain view ahead. It was something to be free, in the saddle at last, and out of doors.

Suddenly a long hail came from the bridge, and Trelease galloped toward them, his horse flecked with foam and trembling as he brought it to a halt beside the two.

"I am going with you," he said curtly. "I did not know you had planned so early a start, Lady Guen."

"How is uncle?" she demanded.

"Sleeping. He will not miss me any more than he will yourself."

The mocking undertone left her sick at heart. She moved her pony abreast of Slim's. It was strange, the reliance and trust she placed in this man, whom she had never met before that night, while Trelease, her own kinsman, filled her with dread.

Behind them rode Trelease, resentful of her avoidance of him, and frankly sullen. Few words were spoken between the three strange comrades of the trail. In silence they pushed forward in the cool, mystical beauty of the September dawn. The first few miles led upward from Eden Valley. As they gained the heights, the valley took on a wondrous charm. Up from the river bottoms, where the deer stole light-footed to drink, a silver-gray mist rose and hung like a cloud until the blaze of



"Don't move!" said Slim.

sunrise scattered it. Then it broke and drifted in shreds of lacy sheerness, clinging to the hillsides and tops of pines until it faded into the gold of the dawn.

Guen thought of the pair who had traveled the trail in the night, and her heart grew bitter. Why had they run away? Did Justin hold to the old love no longer? Did she have no hold on him whatever? He must have known of her coming. She turned suddenly halfway in her saddle and spoke to the man behind her.

"Did Justin know that I was coming?"

"I do not know," lied Wilbur calmly. "I had no chance to speak with him whatever."

Slim slung back his shot over his shoulder:

"You were with him over an hour at the hotel last night, to my positive and accurate knowledge. Ain't you nervous at perjuring your eternal conundrum in that fashion?"

"Why do you lie?" asked Guen wearily, quick scorn in her tone.

"To save you pain," whispered Wilbur, riding beside her. "Why have I come here at all? Simply to be near you."

"How did you find out we had left London at all?"

"Lord Rawling told me. Your mother gave it away to him when he went down to Monk's Rest to see about settling the estate."

Guen smiled for the first time.

"If I had not found out Justin was still alive, he would have succeeded to the title, and after him—you. I hardly see how you could be so concerned for Justin's safety. Have you ever heard from him?"

"Never," lied Wilbur earnestly. "Do you think I could have kept such news to myself, with you and Lady Rawling longing to hear?"

"Perhaps not," she said wearily. "I hate to think hardly of you, Wilbur. But you were the last person he saw the night he left England after—the other happened."

"Somebody had to take him in hand. It was a bad mess all around, and just was in over his head."

"Oh, it was horrible, ghastly!" shuddered Guen. She turned on him almost fiercely. "Why do you bring it all back to me now, of all times? To torment and unnerve me?"

"Not that, Guen, when I love you. But is it worth while dragging just back against his will?"

"He will come willingly; I know he will," returned the girl.

Ahead of them, Slim suddenly reined up short.

"They stopped here. This road we're on is the overland route to the next town. Looks here as if they'd taken the timber trail."

"Well, why do you hesitate?" asked Guen. "If they have taken it, we must follow."

"How far does it lead, MacPherson?" asked Trelease.

Slim took off his hat and pushed back his damp curls doubtfully, staring at the trail, half grown up with underbrush, with now and then a fallen tree or rotted stump to bar the way.

"Straight up to the timber line. Half-way there's a break, and you can cut around the side of Chemango, and, by taking Skull Pass, hit the main road again. But he wouldn't do that, not with Plainey along. You don't cross the Pass unless you're walking in your sleep."

"And this other way——" began Guen.

"Leads up to my old shack," said Slim coolly, bending to look at his girth strap.

"But when we reach this break you speak of, we can tell which way they went. Let us go on."

Slim looked up, and caught Trelease's eyes fixed on his. Some message they flashed, but it passed over Slim's consciousness, leaving no record.

"If the Pass is dangerous——" Trelease started to say more, but he spoke to the dust cloud from the ponies' heels ahead, and followed sulkily.

Two hours after sunrise they stopped to make coffee. Slim built a brushwood fire with a wood rover's craft, but when he returned from rubbing down the horses and turning them out to graze, he found Guen had unpacked the cups and biscuit, and was pouring as calmly as if at her own breakfast table at Monk's Rest, Surrey.

"Do you take sugar, Mr. MacPherson?" she asked.

Slim grinned, chin up, his eyes dwelling hungrily on the picture she made. Trelease had gone for water to a spring they had found. For the moment they were alone, alone in that gorgeous, primeval forest, with the great pines overhead, and the golden waves of morning sunlight trembling down into the green gloom.

"Say," faltered Slim awkwardly. He hardly knew what words were on his tongue, but they were perilously near to utterance at that instant. "Say," he tried again, and broke down. "It's a mighty fine morning, ain't it?"

"Beautiful!" assented Guen earnestly. She was too tired and heartsore even to notice his mood. "Did you say sugar?"

"Please, yes'm. Feel lame from riding?"

"No. I am accustomed to it."

"Just so. Certainly. For them that's not, it's hell—that is, I mean——"

"Oh, don't be troubled!" She smiled up at him with sudden humor. "You must not be conservative with me. We are trail mates pro tem. And, besides, you say you were my brother's friend."

"Saddlemates and grub pals."

She put out her hand over the steaming coffeepot.

"Then you are my pal, too. Please, please, do not put any faith in anything Mr. Trelease tells you."

"I wouldn't believe him if he showed me his private halo and seat check in paradise," Slim said positively. "Don't you go to fretting about that. We've had our own little settlement, and we understand each other."

It had escaped the attention of both that he still held her hand until Trelease's voice spoke:

"May I trouble you for a cup of coffee, Lady Guen?"

"As soon as I have poured Mr. MacPherson's," replied Guen, without embarrassment. "Did you say sugar?"

After a short rest, they mounted and rode forward, Slim watching constantly for the signs that would show the track of the bridal pair. About eleven they came to the place where they had made a fire. The underbrush was beaten down by the ponies' hoofs near by. Some spruce boughs still lay where Plainey had sat enthroned at her first honeymoon meal.

"They've got about five hours' start of us," said Slim. "But there's a pack horse, and that makes their going slower than ours. We'll catch them before to-morrow."

"How far did you say this Pass is, MacPherson?" asked Trelease carelessly.

"About two days' journey, more or less."

"We will reach it to-morrow?"

"About sundown, unless we find the other two have turned off into the timber. There's good feeding ground higher up, if Larry's a mind to go that way. And plenty of game, too. A man could live there right along, and be king on his own ground, if he chose."

"Rather lonely for a woman."

"Not if it was the right man, I should imagine," Slim responded. "Plainey ain't the kind that would give a hang rap about society as long as she had Larry."

He stopped, catching an inscrutable smile on Trelease's lips. Guen seemed sad.

"A family skeleton is no fit trailmate on a lonesome road," Slim told himself. "I've given this one another jingle."

But Guen suddenly spoke her thoughts, her face turned away from him as she looked out over the valley, thousands of feet below:

"One might be happy anywhere on earth with the right one. This is the most beautiful and wonderful land I have ever seen."

"But you would hardly care to spend the rest of your life here, Lady Guen," came Wilbur's voice, somewhat harshly.

"Who knows—with the right one? Justin and I are different from the rest of the Treleases. We smother in towns. We love the wide spaces and far horizons." She leaned forward in her saddle, with parted lips, looking at the glorious panorama about her. "I could be content here; I know I could."

"You can't grow roses or lilies up on these mountain tops," Slim remarked casually. "The air's pretty rugged for them. But you'll find wild flowers clear up to the snow line."

"You think I could not be content?" she asked him swiftly.

Slim turned his head and looked at her steadily.

"Maybe for a couple of months. You don't look like a pioneer woman exactly."

Guen laughed, meeting his gaze with amused appreciation. Already, in spite of her trouble, she loved to bring a certain gleam to this ranger's eyes. And, besides, she knew it annoyed her cousin.

Unmistakable signs of the fugitives appeared on the new trail. Here they would find a log that Larry had thrown out of the way, there a broken branch that had hung too low to pass. Every new proof left Guen in lighter spirits. At times, when the way was impassable, Slim would swing off his pony and wrestle with fallen logs with a ranger's ease, Wilbur lending a hand

after one quick glance of amused contempt from his cousin's eyes.

At evening they came to a good grazing place for the horses, where there was water. Slim showed the girl how to make a couch of spruce boughs for herself and use her saddle blanket for a cover.

"'Cause you're roughing it now."

"I don't mind. It won't be for long."

Trelease smoked quietly beside the fire, and seemed not to notice them. After supper, when Slim started down to see after the ponies, hobbled in the grassy hollow that dimpled the mountainside, he followed leisurely.

"MacPherson, a moment." He used no hedging diplomacy with this man. "You and my Cousin Justin were friends, I understand?"

"Quite so," assented Slim cheerfully. "And then some. Why?"

"You would have his welfare at heart. You would not expose him to danger."

"Well, that depends. He isn't afraid of danger. He likes it. It's the sauce on life's goose, so to speak. What else?"

"But not disgrace that involves those we love. No man invites that sort of thing. I've got to be plain with you, man. He is wanted for murder in England."

Slim's eyes half closed. He rested one foot on a rock, and looked down at the sweep of moonlight-drenched valley.

"You would not understand all, even if I told you. The man was a public character. Justin had borrowed large sums of money from him and couldn't pay. The man offered to cancel the debt on one condition—that Lady Guenever became his wife."

"Well?" asked Slim. "He deserved all he got, didn't he?"

"Your code is different over here. The damning fact remains that he got away, and is a fugitive from justice."

"Why didn't she tell me that?" demanded Slim slowly.

"Ashamed, probably. It is not pleasant to confess about one's brother. I don't want her to find him. In her

blind woman's love, she will sacrifice him to her desire to get him back home."

"I don't believe a damned word you're saying," smiled Slim whimsically.

"Then why did he run when he heard she was coming? What do you know of his life before he came here?"

"We don't ask a fellow to show his birthmark or his vaccination certificate in Eden," grinned Slim. "Let me go, son; I'm out of your deal."

Slim rose. He thought he heard a noise in the strip of woods that backed the camp, but Trelease persisted:

"This isn't my deal. It is Hargrave's. That isn't his name, but we'll call him it for now. Does a man leave his mother country, come here beyond the outposts of society, change his name, and finally sneak away—"

Slim's fist caught him on the jaw, and he went down.

"You pick your pet names when you speak of men in this heathen land, do you see? Don't sling these terms so careless like, because it makes me lose all my religion and hospitality."

He stopped short. Trelease had drawn a revolver in the darkness, and the bullet clipped through the peak of Slim's hat. Before either man could make another move, Guen's voice called to them in alarm. The horses scented danger, and were snorting and trying to break away.

"It's here!" Guen's voice cried again.

"Slim! Slim!"

Slim's heart gave a strange, quickened throb at her calling to him for help.

"It's all right, girl," he answered softly. "I'm here."

And Trelease cursed everything in the grand cosmic circle as he felt the ranger bound over his body and make for the spot where Guen waited.

CHAPTER VIII.

She had half risen from the couch of spruce boughs, and stopped short, staring at what crouched on the other side of the low fire. It feared the

flames between, and yet waited, crouched to spring, tail lightly moving to and fro, muscles rigid as steel springs beneath the velvet skin, eyes set and brilliant in the darkness.

"Don't move!" said Slim.

He was outside the ring of light cast by the brush fire. Almost as his voice reached her, there came the quick report and flash, and the great cat leaped in the air, a tawny streak that rose and fell almost into the fire.

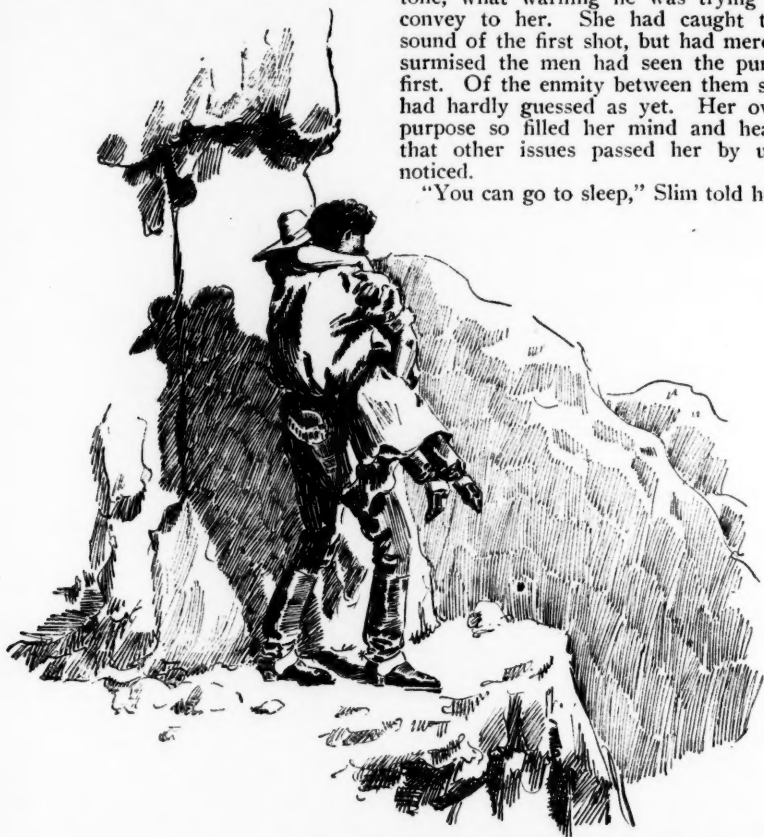
"Good shot!" Wilbur's slow, half-amused tone came from behind. "Better than mine."

Slim hardly heard him. He had reached the spruce couch and helped Guen up. As his hand closed on hers, she gave it a soft, quick pressure.

"You need a gun yourself," Slim told her. "You can't tell what fool thing's going to happen next up here. You take this one of mine. I've got another, besides my rifle. That's light and easy to handle, and all you have to do is point it and keep pulling. She'll do the rest of the work all by herself."

Guen took the revolver from him without protest, her eyes questioning his for what lay hidden beneath his tone, what warning he was trying to convey to her. She had caught the sound of the first shot, but had merely surmised the men had seen the puma first. Of the enmity between them she had hardly guessed as yet. Her own purpose so filled her mind and heart that other issues passed her by unnoticed.

"You can go to sleep," Slim told her.



Instinctively her arms tightened their hold around Slim's throat.

"I'll watch until midnight, then he can take it," with a movement of his head in Wilbur's direction.

The latter met his eyes with curious suspicion.

"I cannot sleep," Guen answered. "I am very tired bodily, but I cannot rest. I wish we could push on through the night. It would give us that much more advantage."

"The horses couldn't stand it. In this country we think more of them than we do of humans when it comes to care. I wouldn't give up my pony yonder for anything you could offer me. Better lie down and rest, even if you can't sleep. There won't be any more cats around. I'm going to get the pelt from this now."

"How much will you take for it, MacPherson?" asked Wilbur carelessly.

"Not for sale," retorted Slim gently. He took out his knife and tried its blades one by one before he added: "I'm going to part with it by deed of gift later on, after it's properly dressed."

Guen had taken his advice and gone back to the rude couch.

In silence for nearly an hour, the two men kept each other company, Slim keeping steadily at his task, Trelease on a log before the fire, smoking a short pipe moodily, and watching first the ranger, then the shadowy figure on the other side of the fire. Finally Slim rose and stretched himself.

"Afraid to go to sleep with me around loose?" he asked, grinning down at the other man. "Gee! Don't you know we fellows out here don't hurt sleeping enemies? You're safe as a kid in long clothes."

"It's your next move," said Trelease lightly. "I am not tired."

"Then you watch, and keep up the fire. I'm going to sleep."

Whistling softly under his breath, Slim wrapped a blanket about him and threw himself down by the fire.

Trelease waited until his heavy breathing showed he was unconscious. Even then he sat on the log, thinking of many things. Not of America and the mad quest that had led him to this

wilderness. He was absorbed in a mood of self-pity and recrimination against fate and fortune that had cast his lot in warped molds. He had never had a fair chance. By grace of courtesy and a *mésalliance* contracted a generation back by a careless Lord Rawling, he could call both Guen and Larry cousin.

"Cousin!" he muttered. "I've been a beggar ever since I was born, begging the right to exist at all. I've fagged for every damned rascal in the family who was too proud or cowardly to do his dirty work himself, and had to keep my mouth shut or be called an infernal cad for telling. And yet, curse them all, if this goes through, I'll succeed to the title yet!"

He knew that Larry would keep his word. To all intents and purposes, he would be dead from henceforth unless he found out the truth and that Trelease had lied. Guen would tell it to him as soon as they met. Sitting there in the dull glow from the fire, with the wind souging overhead through the spruces, he saw the same point facing him at every crossroad of thought. They must not meet.

Even MacPherson, crude as he was, had somehow grasped that, but from a different angle. He had made him believe that the message Guen carried would ruin Larry's life and happiness. If he could have turned him, they might have worked together and compelled the girl to return to Eden; but the spell of the eternal feminine was working on him, and he would do what Guen asked him to.

Clearly it was up to him—Trelease—to act alone. They would catch up with the fugitives by sunset the following day, Slim had told them. And whatever was done must be done without Guen's knowledge. He had drawn on the Westerner in the hot flush of anger, but his flesh chilled at the thought of cold-blooded murder. Something in his nature cried out against that, something that could dally and play with compromise without a qualm. So he sat until dawn, thinking how he could juggle with his conscience

and yet cause the death or permanent disablement of this most disconcerting comrade of the trail.

An hour past dawn they were again in the saddle and on their way, Trelease cursing his cowardice as he realized it was the last day, Slim bouyant and fresh after his rest, and Guen silent and rather white.

"Well, now," Slim said, riding beside her, "who knows? This whole thing may come out with a whoopee yet, and grand right and left, balance your partners. Things always take on a different complexion in sunlight, don't they? I've always thought we wasted a fearful lot of time asleep. Never liked nighttime, and haven't any special love of this star gazing and moon sickness. She's altogether too uncertain and chilly for me. I'll take that old gold fellow up yonder, and lift my beak to him any time. He's just a big smile, now, ain't he? That's better. You smiled yourself then. Can't you chirp up a bit? It may not be so."

"What may not?" asked Guen, won out of her mood in spite of herself.

"Just a fool saying of mine. Life's just chance, anyhow. You've always got the next deal to count on. God, ain't this a morning to make a man feel tall as the hills?"

He lifted his hat, and raised his face to the rose-flushed sky. Guen turned her head and looked at him as though she had never seen him before, wonderment in her grave, lovely eyes. The lean, boyish face was fairly transfigured as he drank in the beauty of the dawn. The thought in her leaped to her lips:

"Do you think that he will be sorry to leave it?"

"Who? Larry? He won't leave it," Slim replied serenely. "Are you going to try and make him?"

"I shall not urge him either way," she said simply. "I am only a messenger to him. The issue lies solely with himself."

"It can't do that. No issue lies solely with a man's own self. He's always got to fuss around and face a bunch of obligations that he owes to

God, and life, and society, and the rest of things that hold bonds over us as soon as we're born. No man's free to do as he likes."

"That is what I shall tell him; but, you see, he has done as he liked, without regard to any higher duty."

"You mean in his marrying our Plainey?"

"Yes," she said firmly.

Slim withdrew his gaze from the far-off mountain tops and looked at her.

"Are you just like all the rest of wimmenfolks?" he asked. "Are you jealous of Plainey?"

"Only so far as his love for her has blinded him to what lies awaiting him on the other side."

"Hell!" murmured Slim plaintively. "I wish you'd talk a straight line. I keep feeling I'm all wound round with silk thread. What's waiting for him over there?"

"I can only tell him that."

"Which way now?" shouted back Wilbur, who had ridden well ahead. "The trail divides again here."

Slim rode on to where the Englishman waited at the fork of the road. He swung down from the saddle and scrutinized the hoofprints that had pressed down the leaf mold at the side of the trail. Larry had tried to avoid detection in that way, never dreaming that his pursuer was to be his fellow ranger, who knew all woodcraft tricks.

"They've pushed straight ahead toward the Pass," he said finally. "It ain't likely that he'd take this other way, anyhow, seeing it's a blind lumber road. Goes about four miles and stops short."

"What lies beyond the Pass?"

"Wilderness for about forty miles through the reserve," replied Slim briefly. "And he knows every step of the way."

"Then why don't you tell Lady Guen that the chase is hopeless? You're simply leading her on as a matter of profit."

Guen had joined them and listened wearily. Now she spoke:

"Turn back when you are tired, Wil-

bur. I shall not, and Mr. MacPherson understands that."

"He sure does," Slim murmured warmly. "On we go, my hearties. We'll make the Pass by sunset, and I hope our guardian angels are getting busy right now, for we'll need them, all right."

As the day wore on, Guen's impatience increased. Feeling the end near, she begrudged every moment spent in rest for the horses or themselves. Wilbur rode in silence, brooding over his own thoughts. They were not pleasant ones. Now and then he met Guen's quick glance and avoided its questioning. All the cowardice in his nature shrank from the issue ahead of him. He was being forced by fate to act decisively, and the game was new to him. Evasion, subterfuge, deceit, cloaked as diplomacy, these were old, familiar paths. He hated being made the actual instrument of his own designs. Yet, as he rode behind Slim, he knew that the closing deal between them lay ahead, at Skull Pass; and he knew, too, what he should do there when the moment came.

Higher and higher wound the trail. They had nearly reached the timber line now. There were more rocks. The vegetation was sparse and scrubby in growth. About them peak after peak showed shadowy through cloud drifts, the sole brotherhood of these altitudes. Below seemed only space, with scattered shreds of cloud here and there.

"The Pass is yonder," Slim said, at last, his voice sounding oddly strained and sharp in the silence. He pointed with his quirt at a jutting mass of rock that showed ahead like a great skull profile on the side of the mountain. "We have to go along a narrow ledge where it looks as if the mouth was. Can you see?"

"What lies below?" asked Wilbur.

"Three thousand feet and more into the cañon. Nobody ever came back to give exact measurements."

"Guen, it is utter madness to go ahead," began Trelease.

"Justin went, and took his bride with

him," smiled back Guen. "Go on, Slim."

It was the second time she had called him that. Slim would have ridden ahead after that though all chaos yawned at his trail's end. And it did, almost. He alone of the three knew Skull Pass and the gruesome tragedies that had given it that name. He had crossed it with Larry, and alone, too, many a time; but never with a girl and a tenderfoot in tow, and three horses.

And yet he looked at the face of the girl, and felt every nerve leap in answer to her appeal. She wanted to reach Larry Hargrave in time to save him from some danger that threatened. That was as close to the truth as Slim could get, but it sufficed. If the horses held out, he swore to himself that he would get her over the Pass that night, and let her speak face to face with the man she sought.

And at the same instant, Trelease vowed he would never let the trio get across Skull Pass alive—not all three, only two.

It was sunset when they reached the upgrade that curved around the face of the great rocky bend. Narrower the trail grew until only one could take it in safety, and Slim called a halt at a point of vantage.

"We'll play the fox, goose, and bag-of-corn game here," he said. "I'll take Lady Guen over first, alone, and you take care of the ponies, Trelease. Then I'll come back and lead hers over. Then come back after my own, and you can follow, leading yours. We'll make it all right."

"What if they plunge?" asked Trelease sulkily.

"They won't if you let them alone. They know a darn sight more how to act at a time like this than we do. I'd trust my neck to Tivoli there quicker'n I would to myself. Bunch them, and hold their bridles, and don't move till I get back."

Wilbur obeyed directions. Guen did not speak. Slipping from her saddle, she waited until Slim stepped to her side.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Carry you across," said Slim briefly. "I won't try it any other way."

"But why? I am clear-headed and quiet."

"So have a lot of others been, and when they get out there in the middle of the Pass, they take one look down, and just drop off naturally."

"But it will be ten times harder carrying me," she objected. "Tie me to you with a rope, the same as we do in the mountain climbing. The other is absurd."

For answer, Slim bent down and lifted her in his arms very gently and easily, but with no chance for demurring, and slowly, steadily moved along the narrow rock ledge with his burden.

Halfway across she closed her eyes. They seemed to hang for the moment suspended in mid-air, the jutting mass of rock that formed the nostril cavities of the skull overhanging them. Instinctively her arms tightened their hold around Slim's throat.

"Don't do that, girl," he said, under his breath. "I might forget."

"Forget what?"

"To keep to the trail I know."

She was silent, but the clasp of her arms did not relax, not until they had gained the other side, where the ledge widened and dipped into a plateau. They were out of sight of Wilbur. For one minute Slim hesitated, looking down into her eyes as he held her; then he released her and stepped back, head up, eyes half shut, as he stared out over the great divide between the mountains.

Guen stood where he left her, looking after him, her fingers clenched, her lips half smiling. All the world, her world, seemed to have vanished down there in the cloud drifts that lay between her and the valley.

"Be careful, Slim," she said, almost with wistful tenderness.

He smiled and waved his hand to her as he started back along the ledge. It seemed an age while she waited alone there on the shelf of rock that projected like a huge lichen from the

mountain wall. She could hear the voice of Slim speaking to her pony as he led it along, and it came toward her, the bridle thrown over the saddle horn, while he went back for his own and Wilbur.

"You'd better go first," he told him. "Then if anything happens, I can reach you and your pony."

"I will go last," said Wilbur lightly. "I'd rather watch the way you do it, and follow your lead."

"It's easy if you don't do anything to frighten your horse," Slim told him, testing the cinch on his saddle. "I'm going to ride Tivoli. I'd rather trust to her sense than my own."

Wilbur did not answer. He held his bridle over one arm, and lit a fresh cigarette coolly. Slim was already in the saddle when he tossed the match over the rock and thought how far it would fall—as far as something else presently.

"Ready," he said.

Tivoli and its rider were barely a couple of feet ahead. Sure-footed and cautious as a wild cat, the stocky Indian pony held to the narrow ledge, full of confidence in herself and her rider.

Trelease waited until they came to the narrowest place before he acted; then he reached forward, and held the lighted cigarette to the pony's sensitive flank. He knew what an English horse would do under like circumstances. It would have reared and bolted, throwing self and rider down into the yawning chasm below. But he knew not the ways of the broncho, nor its quick correlation of instincts. Tivoli knew well enough what it meant if she were to spring forward. Also, she knew there was an enemy behind her, a devilish enemy that fought with stinging, branding fire; and, therefore, she simply bucked and kicked out at the unseen foe, and the body of Wilbur Trelease went spinning and hurtling down into Skull Cañon, while his pony stood still and hugged the side cliff, waiting its cue from Tivoli. On the ledge lay a half-burned cigarette.

Slim looked back just once, and reached for the slack bridle. Not a

sound came from the cañon below, not even the clatter of sand or pebbles.

"Are you safe?" called Guen's voice, with a ring of suspense.

"Coming, girl, all right," said Slim. He looked down once more, listening.

"God!" he muttered, with tense muscles. "He sure got his that time."

Carefully he moved on, guiding both ponies over Skull Pass.



The body of Wilbur Trelease went spinning and hurlling down into Skull Cañon.

CHAPTER IX.

Slim felt that night he had seen the high-tide mark of a woman's courage.

He had told Guen simply, gently, what had happened, and

watched her stand with clenched hands and closed eyes, leaning against her saddle, one hand on the pony's mane. It was a horrible issue to face. Somewhere at the bottom of the cañon lay Wilbur Trelease's body. Only a minute before he had ridden beside them. His cigarette was not yet burned out back on the rock ledge.

Guen had lifted her head finally, and said:

"Let us go on."

That was all. No expression of the living horror that gripped her as she pictured the death of her cousin. No shrinking from the responsibility thrown upon her. Simply the order to

go on. Slim could have shouted aloud to the sunset skies the glory and valor of his lady fair at that moment.

So they had ridden on, speechless, yet drawn closer together by the tragedy than weeks of acquaintanceship could have done. When the shadows deepened and the light faded over the land, Slim told her what he had known since they left Skull Rock. There were no hoofprints now along the trail.

"But why?" she demanded. "Why didn't you tell me? Have they turned back? You surely cannot think—"

"I don't think they ever crossed the Pass," Slim said. "I was pretty well stirred up back there, and lost my bear-

ings in a way. We'll make a camp here, and rest up, and be away by day-break."

"The same way?"

He met her eyes pityingly.

"There isn't any other, girl."

That night Slim held communion with his soul. Wrapped in a blanket on one side of the spruce-knot fire, he failed to sleep. And the query he put to his soul, and to the Infinite that had granted him a soul, was, briefly, whether he had a right to tell the woman he loved that he was hers, body and soul.

"I can't sleep." Her voice startled him. She stood beyond him, her slender figure lit up by the flame glow, behind her the dark mystery of the pines. "Did he cry out when he fell?"

Slim bent over and stirred the fire.

"Come here and sit down. You're just nervous. No, he didn't cry. Sit here, and I'll talk to you, and make you forget, and get your grip back. That's the way men do."

She took his place, her blanket half falling from her shoulders, her long, fair hair unbound. Slim's mouth took on its odd, whimsical smile as he looked at her, leaning back against a tree trunk. He threw himself down at her feet, near the fire, where he could throw on wood now and then.

And he talked to her, talked of his own life and dreams as he never had to a living soul, not even Justin himself. He told her of the youngster, fresh from university life, cursed with the wanderlust, and a special gift for indirection, who had found his way West and never returned.

"It makes me think sometimes of the old Argonaut tales," he said. "We all came out, following the gold lure, and we found enchantment. She won't let you go, this West of ours. She's Circe and that girl on the violet island that held old Ulysses himself in one. She's a witch, but once she holds out her hands to you, you can't go back East, not if she kills you, you can't. So I've never gone back."

"But you've found happiness, Slim?"

"Have I?" He looked up at her longingly. "I thought I had. Now I feel a sort of divine disturbance." He laughed. "It's been mighty kind of you to listen to me. Could you sleep now?"

"No." Her cool, pale face maddened him with its perfect repose. The spell of the wilderness infolded them both. Her tone was low and very sweet. "Tell me more about yourself. You are Justin's friend—"

"And that's why I mustn't tell you any more," Slim interposed quickly, passionately. "Because I'm his pal, and you're somebody that I've only known two days, I'm barred from telling you just how I feel and what I think of you, girl. It wouldn't be right for me to say I wish to God there was just you and me in the world up here for the rest of our lives. You see, it wouldn't be right. But I know. Larry and I've talked this woman business over together a good deal. He's held out for long acquaintance and sure ground before you leap; but I say you go along and all at once you see a face that calls the heart and soul out of you, and you'll never find life the same afterward. I've thought love had roped me several times. This is different. It—it hurts!"

He laid his head on his crossed arms. Guen was silent. She did not even look at him, but stared at the fire with wide, sad eyes. Presently Slim raised his head, but the figure beside him had risen and gone quietly back to the shadows.

How long he sat there he could not tell. It was at the dim hour before dawn. The whole world seemed folded in gray mist. The fire was gray also, with only a faint gleam beneath. Slim heard a sound behind him, and started up. At first sight of the figure standing facing him, he thought the ghost of Trelease had slipped past the outposts of the other bourne. Tall, silent, and menacing it stood there, waiting. Slim reached for his hip, but the voice stayed his hand.

"Great God, Slim!"

It was Larry—or, rather, Justin Tre-

lease. The two gripped hands in silence for a minute.

"I did not know it was you, boy," Justin said. "We took to the timber when I saw Plainey could not make the Pass. Her horse was green and afraid, and we didn't know we were being followed until we saw your fire to-night. I was ready to quench it just now. Who ride the other horses?"

Slim answered warily:

"Where's Plainey?"

"Above here, at our camp. Why?"

Slim took a deep breath.

"I don't like to break up this honeymoon, but you're needed badly, and I've come after you to keep away less interested parties. It looked to me as if the whole affair needed consideration and delicate handling, so I took charge."

"Who is with you?" demanded Justin quietly, but sternly this time.

"I am," said Guen's voice behind them, tremulous and wondrously tender. "Do you mind, Just?"

And here, as Slim said later, the course of true love slipped several cogs. For down the rocky incline came Plainey, and when she saw her forty-eight-hour husband clasped in the arms of this lovely stranger, she lost all her sense of the fitness of things, and, for the first time in her life, fainted. Slim saw the slender little figure fall, and reached her first.

"Go on. Let me carry her," he called, as Justin started headlong up the slope. "I told you this affair needed delicate handling, boy."

"Oh, Just, how dear she is!" Guen said fervently, bending over the unconscious form. "What a little countess she will make!"

"Countess?" Justin forgot even his bride. It was Slim who found fresh water and bathed the white face and rubbed warmth into the chilled hands. "For God's sake, Guen, talk plainly to me. I am half crazed with Wilbur's coming and what he told me."

"He was the airiest fabricator ever struck Eden," quoth Slim. "He had me going for a time there. And now, boy, his earthly residue lies at the foot

of Skull Gulch, not meaning to startle you. He tried to remove me, and Tivoli removed him."

"Poor devil!" said Justin, his eyelids narrowing, his lips drawing tensely at the news. "So he loses the chance of witnessing my disgrace. He worked hard for it."

"What do you mean?" Guen's eyes were bright and eager. As Plainey stirred and spoke softly, she knelt beside her, and held her in her arms. "Let me speak to her first. She doesn't know she even has a sister."

Slim stood back during the introduction. He did not feel attuned completely to the family reunion. Guen's voice called him back.

"I want you to hear this, too," she said. "You have a right to. Go on, Justin, please."

"But I hardly understand. What is there to tell? You know why I left England, Guen."

"Because you were deep in debt."

"No; because accidentally I was the cause of Sir George Vance's death. We had been playing cards, as usual, and I had lost heavily to him. He proposed your hand as a settlement of my accounts, and I struck him. Wilbur was there. So was Lord Rawling, Uncle Clive. When they saw Sir George was dead, Wilbur persuaded me to leave the country. I crossed the Channel on the morning boat, and caught an American liner the next day. He struck the back of his head on the fender."

"But, Just," Guen bent forward, her hand still clasping Plainey's, "Sir George is as much alive as you or me!"

"Condolences," murmured Slim.

"He secured a government office directly afterward, I know, through Uncle Clive's help, and has been in India the past two years."

"I thought he was in—an entirely different place," corrected Justin grimly. He rose, stretching out his arms widely, as one who finds sudden relief from great tension. Strangely enough, he was not thinking of the man he believed dead, but rather of Wilbur's pale, well-bred face, as he had faced him with lie upon lie back at the hotel

in Eden. Then Guen's words recurred to him again. "Why did you give my wife the title? Where is Bat?"

"Dead, dear, over a year," Guen told him, her eyes filled with tears. "That is why I have looked for you all over the world. Wilbur told us you were surely gone beyond hope, but Uncle George helped me, and when I found out where you really were, why—I came to you."

"Bat dead?" repeated Justin. "Over a year!" He met Slim's keen eyes. "My elder brother, Slim, Bartholomew. A dear lad. All that I was not."

Plaine's smooth cheek pressed against his hand. He drew her to him tenderly, and smiled over her brown head at Guen.

"Such a little countess!" said Guen again; but Plaine did not speak her thoughts. She laid her head on Justin's shoulder, and looked out at the mountain view, the silver mist shot through with rose and gold now, and rising slowly from the valleys. Her arms were around Justin's throat. Somehow a dread possessed her.

"Larry, my Larry, will you go back?" she whispered to him, using the name she loved best.

"Only as I am compelled to," laughed Justin. "Eden is good enough for me."

Nearly a month later, Major Fenway took leave of the party. They had found him convalescent on their return, but very much perturbed over Wilbur's tragic death and Guen's unaccountable aversion to going home.

"It's most annoying, Wilbur's dying in such a fashion, you know," he said to Justin. "We can't possibly ship the remains home, or even find them. In fact, I think it is quite like Wilbur to cause us anxiety even in his demise. He was a most objectionable lad, God rest his soul! I'm sure. I shall have a tablet to his memory placed in the church at Monk's Rest."

It had been arranged that Lady Guen was to sail with Justin and Plaine later. Slim said little. After the major left, the party went to live at the old

log shack on Big Chemango, where Slim and Justin had roughed it in the old days. Now it had been transformed into a roomy mountain lodge, with wide verandas and rocky fireplaces. Here it was that Guen found her happiness.

Day after day, she rode the trails with Slim, talking little, learning much. Slim trod the stars these days, but still he waited and wondered how far a man was expected to stand the strain of silence. Somehow this thing that had seemed impossible had taken form. He knew he had Justin's consent, and Plaine's tender eyes urged him on; but it was hard to break through this fair, serene Saxon girl's reserve.

"Just tell her, Slim, that's all," Plaine told him, seeing his trouble.

"Tell her!" groaned Slim hopelessly. "Can't she see it in every word I say, and every time I look at her?"

If she did, Guen gave no sign, and there came a day when Slim's patience went. They had been riding far beyond the timber line. Only great boulders and dwarfed pines covered the rough ground.

"We'll rest the ponies a few minutes," said Slim.

He swung off Tivoli, and went to help Guen down, as usual; but as she held out her arms to him, it seemed as though the gods had turned old Chemango into a heaven-kissed hill, and Slim received their gift there. Not a word was spoken. She slipped down into his arms, and Slim held her closely, jealously, while he kissed her lips.

"Girl, girl," he said softly, "why did you make me wait so long? Couldn't you hear my heart calling you?"

"I wanted to be sure," said Guen, smiling up at him.

"Sure? Haven't you known I was yours since that first night in Eden—haven't you, on the level?"

"I don't know," whispered Guen. "It is all like a dream now. I only remember that I felt safe with you, and as though we should find the way."

"Haven't we?"

It was wondrously still on Big Chemango. The gods give their gifts in silence, even in Eden.



The Burden Bearers

By Hildegard Lavender

Author of "In Fullest Confidence," "The Country Guest," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK J. MURCH

IT sometimes seems as if every really enterprising woman in this most enterprising age forms at least one organization to force her pet hobby upon an indifferent community, or to remove from it her pet abomination. I shall soon join the ranks of these enterprising ladies, unless, in the meantime, I can discover the headquarters of that society famed by Beatrice Herford—the Let-well-alone Society, for learning the names and addresses of causes and persons that need no help, and for then leaving them cheerfully alone. If I could persuade my friend Deborah to join the Let-well-alone Society, I should not be forced to form my Anti-burden-bearing Association.

I know that there is a crying demand for such an organization. I know, from conversations with my friends, from the sacred and enraged confidences of women who have just come smarting from the inflictions of their burden-bearing acquaintances, that such an association would meet a real need. My dear friend Deborah is not unique in the world.

Deborah is one of the large body of women who have taken for their favorite text the beautiful one: "Bear ye one another's burdens." It is a beautiful text, though I am rapidly learning to loathe it; and if Deborah's interpretation of it were other than it is, no one could find any fault. But it is her reading of the words, her mode of prac-

ticing the principle they lay down that has almost fixed me in my resolve to crystallize the anti-burden-bearing sentiment of the community into something definite, to organize the anti-burden bearers and to conduct a relentless campaign for the extermination of the Deborahs.

Deborah's reading of her favorite text, you understand, does not impel her, for example, on learning that my cook has left, to come to my house and to prepare the dinner. With so practical and efficient a form of burden bearing, I should be in perfect accord. Her sympathy with me does not even lead her to invite me to her house, or to a restaurant. In a like manner, her sympathy with the downtrodden has never led her to do any district visiting, any district nursing, any lobbying at her State capital to induce the passage of better laws for the oppressed. I am not at all sure that it has even ever led her into the extravagance of contributing ten dollars to any charitable cause. And yet Deborah has the reputation of being one of the tenderest-hearted women in the world.

Deborah will appear at your house at luncheon. She will look weary and harassed. She will sigh, and pass her hand across her forehead with such obvious languor that you will be forced, in mere civility, to inquire the cause of her low spirits.

"I just came up from the ferry,"



Frank J. March

Deborah will appear at your house at luncheon. She will look weary and harassed.

Deborah will reply, with a deeper sigh. "Through those tenement streets, you know. Aren't they awful? It simply breaks my heart to think of people living so wretchedly, so squalidly. And little children, too!"

If you are not yet deeply learned in Deborahs, you may say, at this juncture: "Oh, I am so glad you are interested in these things, for the Children's Mission particularly needs workers just now. Could you give an hour a week to a little cooking club or a dancing class for girls?" But Deborah will promptly enlighten you as to the quality of her sympathy.

"The Children's Mission!" she will exclaim impatiently. "Ah, such conditions as I saw this morning can't be remedied by any children's mission. It's

like treating smallpox with rose water. No—that's what makes the whole thing so depressing, so heart-rending. It's the vast, irremediable injustice of Life!"

And then Deborah will again assume the expression and the pose of a martyr to her own sympathies.

You, in your ignorance, continue to protest that the classes and clubs for children, giving them a wholesome enjoyment, keeping them from the contamination of the streets, are really better than treating contagious disease with odoriferous waters; but Deborah then goes off on another tack, and declines for a more personal reason than the uselessness of combating the vast, irremediable injustice of Life.

"Anyway, I really have no time," she assures you. "No, not even an hour a week that I can count on for my own. Of course, I do have free hours, but I am never sure which ones they will be—neither mother nor Aunt Belle is well this winter, and I feel that my first duty is to be always available for them. But, oh, those poor, ragged, dirty, noisy, quarreling little children!"

In your annoyance, you may feel like calling Deborah a hypocrite; but she really is not. She is simply a person lacking the energy to transmute emotion into action. She loves emotion—that is what makes her a burden bearer. But she has the unregenerate, human dislike of bestirring herself overmuch, and so her emotion remains merely a conversational asset.

It is in her personal relations that the burden bearer shines the most effulgent, and that she inspires the bitterest feelings among her friends and the most outspoken admiration among her recent acquaintances, who protest that they have never met a more sympathetic soul. I say "friends" advisedly; for, after all, you cannot strike the name of a woman from your list of acquaintances. You cannot even erase it from your heart merely because she happens to make life leaden for you with her anxiety about

terest in your misfortunes, her habit of glutting herself with sympathy at your expense.

Here are a few of the things you bear. You bear with meeting a friend on the street who exclaims, with mingled surprise and reproach: "Oh, I am so glad to see you about again! Deborah told me that you were so ill yesterday!" You reply bitterly that you had a headache yesterday, a common or garden headache, an ordinary, all-in-the-day's-work headache, and that this



"What has happened?" you cry across the wire, tensing your muscles to bear a fearful blow.

your affairs, her worry over your health, her pity for your losses. You may feel strongly impelled to these cruelties, but you remind yourself that you and Deborah grew up together, that you "crammed" for the same examinations at college, that her father and yours fought side by side in the war, that your mother was her mother's bridesmaid, that there are, in short, ten thousand perfectly adequate reasons why you may not obey your primitive impulse to slam the door in her face, and to tell her exactly what you think of her. And so you continue to tolerate her undue in-

was the extent of your illness. Your friend goes on, annoyed with you for having won her sympathy on false pretenses—as though you had had anything to do with it.

The next day the telephone rings, and an acquaintance assures you that she was terribly sorry to hear you had lost some money; she had overheard your friend Deborah telling some people about it at luncheon at the club; and Deborah was as much upset over it as if the loss had been her own. Was it very much? Was there no hope of recovering it? Had you employed de-



And Deborah looks at the baby and sighs again.

tectives? Was it a robbery, or a failure of investments? Oh! And your acquaintance is distinctly and justly enraged with you for having made a fool of her when you say politely that you lost an old change purse containing twenty-seven cents and two sore-throat tablets.

At a tea your new, next-door neighbor but one looks at you nervously, timidly. She seems to be in several minds about speaking to you; but finally she rushes into shy, sympathetic speech. She hopes you won't think it dreadful for a comparative stranger to intrude; but she herself is a mother, and she feels *so* for you in your anxiety about your boy Lionel. You gasp—what has Lionel been doing now? You murmur: "My anxiety?" And the kind, little neighbor says, crimson with embarrassment: "Yes—your friend, Miss Deborah Swan, mentioned it yesterday—his refusal to take kindly to the thought of college, and his wanting to do something else right away."

You laugh in your relief, and then you frown angrily over the thought of

Deborah. You explain to the lady from the next door but one that Lionel is just nine years old, and that neither you nor Lionel's father is worrying very seriously over the youth's declaration that he intends to abandon educational pursuits at the earliest possible instant, and go into the merry business of ash collecting, because in your suburb the ashman blows a cheerful horn as he goes upon his rounds.

Deborah, the universal purveyor of bad news, the universal bestower of sympathy, calls you up on the telephone. Have you seen this morning's papers? No, you reply briefly—that is, you haven't had time to read them—the baby upset the ink on the library rug, and you've been busy applying milk to the stain. Deborah's "You poor dear! But

baby didn't swallow any, did he?" reminds you that you were unwise to mention your small, domestic calamity. As you loudly and hastily assure her that baby is perfectly well—never was better—didn't touch the ink, only pulled on the desk blotter—you wonder in just what calamitous form the incident will meet you when you go out upon your travels.

But this morning Deborah is willing to forego the lesser tragedy for the greater. In a muffled voice, she says that she is glad it is she and no mere stranger who is to tell you the bad news of the day. She will let you know at once—her heart bleeds for you—you and he were such good friends.

"What has happened?" you cry across the wire, tensing your muscles to bear a fearful blow.

Well, that Mr. Blacklock of whom she has so often heard you and William speak was badly hurt last night in an automobile accident. The car skidded against an elevated railway pole, and overturned. There isn't much hope of his recovery, the people at the J. Hood

Wright Hospital say, according to the papers. Of course, they always exaggerate—and Deborah, for her part, doesn't take the least stock in the story that he had been dining too gayly, and that there were members of the ballet corps in the car with him. She is awfully sorry for you, and awfully glad that she was able to break the news to you herself, instead of having you confronted with it in cold type over some stranger's shoulder in the street car.

Faint, and sick, and dizzy, you ring up the hospital, and learn that the unfortunate Mr. Blacklock who was hurt last night is not your Mr. Blacklock at all, but a gilded youth of lively habits, who is entirely and unjustly out of danger. And there is murder in your heart toward the ever-sympathetic and thoughtful Deborah; but you are too weak and shaken from the shock she has given you to kill her, even were she within striking distance, and even had your previous education and the laws of your land made homicide a pursuit in which you were likely to indulge.

Deborah it is who first discovers that your husband is looking run-down, and who asks you, with an expression of pity and carefully repressed foreboding on her countenance, if William isn't working too hard, and if you think that that pays in the long run. Has the strike of the marble workers affected his business badly? She has hated to ask about it; but, seeing him look so harassed—You interrupt her with cold brutality to say that William is always well except when he eats lobster at night, and that the day after that indulgence he invariably looks like the wrath of Heaven. Deborah says "Oh!" and gives you a glance of admiration for your gal-

lant fortitude in the face of your husband's real illness, in which she quite obviously continues to believe.

Later she tells you a cheery little tale of the Awkwrights, who, having lived together in peace and enjoyment for fifteen years—the term of your own married life—were now going through agonies, Mr. Awkwright having discovered, to his conscientious horror, that he was in love with another lady than Mrs. Awkwright.

"He looked miserably ill," says Deborah thoughtfully, "for a long time before he nerved himself to tell his poor wife, and to take counsel with her about what it was best to do. The very best men so often seem to get a curious wandering bee in their bonnets about that age," she adds, and fixes you with a mournful eye full of foreboding.

Deborah it is who sighs as she looks at the baby, sleeping rosily and plumply in his crib. Have you heard about the Denisons? she asks. You haven't heard; and if you could graciously say that you don't want to hear, you would be glad. But the social conventions prevent such freedom of speech; and Deborah looks at the baby and sighs again, and says that the Denison baby has infant paraly-



Frank J. Morris

William does not agree with me.

sis. Her heart is quite broken for them. It's strange, is it not, how that dread scourge attacks the very healthiest seeming children, the very best-cared-for ones? But she believes that there is an occasional accidental cure nowadays. It would be splendid, wouldn't it, if a real remedy were discovered? And she sighs again, and looks at the baby, and then, with the effect of conscientiously cheering up for your sake, she changes the subject.

All these incidents show the Deborahs of one's acquaintance in the guise of lugubrious nuisances. And so they are. But they are something more subtly dangerous than that. They are an invitation to self-pity. Every woman at heart is always ready to pity herself for the injustices of her lot, the sorrows that she has borne, the sorrows that she will have to bear. It is only Spartan training that enables her to refrain from loud lamentations upon her woes, and to go about doing the day's work as it comes.

The Deborahs whom one knows insidiously undo the effect of this training. I may be bored to death at Deborah's pity when it is bestowed unsought; but when I want to grumble, when I want to whine, when I want to bewail myself, I know where I shall be tolerated—nay, welcomed. I go to Deborah with my headache, and she

does not tell me to walk in the open air and to forget it. Not she! She puts a pillow beneath my head, sops my brow with cologne, murmurs pityingly to me, and makes me feel really quite ill.

When Lionel breaks the neighbor's window, I know who will sympathize with the cruel troubles of mothers and of neighbors; and when William growls fearfully and often successfully against those evening rites which drag him from his smoking-jacketed ease before the fire, I know who will pour the oil of pity upon the hardships of wifehood.

The burden bearers are not only a social nuisance, clouding the brightness of the days with sorrows and the rumors of sorrows; they are weakeners of moral fiber. If they were merely nuisances, they might be taken as a discipline; but their other, more serious effect demands their extermination. That is why a Society for the Suppression of Burden Bearers is urgently needed.

William does not agree with me.

"All that is needed," he says between puffs at his pipe, "is a society for supplying husbands to unoccupied spinsters. Whoever heard of a married woman with time to be a general bearer of other women's burdens? That's all that's needed for the suppression of the tribe of trouble sharers—husbands."

Sometimes, in his crude and brutal way, William states great truths.



In the Spring

NOT of the babbling brooks and whispering pines this ditty,
But of the throbbing joy of springtime in the city.

Of bursting buds, sing me no songs, or grave or witty.
I want the touch of hands when spring comes to the city.

Those who would chant of soulless trees and streams I pity;
Give me the thrill of life when spring comes to the city.

POSTSCRIPT.

A different song I'd sing if I had not met Kitty—
But Kitty marries me when spring comes to the city.

L. E. JOHNSTON.



ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

BETTY patted down the earth around the four-o'clock plants, pulled up a weed that was crowding the Japanese morning-glories, and rose from her cramped position to ease her lame back. Trowel in hand, she glanced with satisfaction over her morning's work, and her eyes in their survey met those of a freckled-faced small boy, who was in the act of climbing over the high board fence. Something gave him pause, and he perched where he was uncertainly, poised for flight.

"Hello!" Betty said, smiling. "You're the new boy next door, aren't you? What's your name?"

The boy regarded the young lady a moment with a half frown, and then a grin distorted his far from ornamental countenance.

"Jamie," he said genially. "Say, you got a swell garden."

"We've had a hard time of it," the young lady sighed. "You see, when we moved in, in the spring, it was all ashes and plaster here, and we were afraid nothing would grow. It was discouraging."

10

"I sh'd say. The man on the other side of us, he bought black dirt."

"Yes, I know; but it's dreadfully expensive," Betty said. "We couldn't afford it, so my father got some from the big lot over there. The owner told him he might. It took a great deal of work, but it paid."

"It sure did. Least, it looks like it from here."

Betty took the hint.

"Come over the rest of the way," she said. "I think you'll like it."

With a clever spring and a curious twist of his legs, the boy landed clear of the garden bed, and stood beside her.

"Gee!" he cried admiringly. "Gee! Some class, eh?"

"I like the tuberose best," she said. "But, of course, they aren't out yet. Did you ever see anything so cute as those daisies?"

Jamie was not enthusiastic over the daisies; they looked too much like pin-cushions, and didn't smell "worth shucks."

"You ain't got a single pansy!" he cried, in dismay. "I ain't ever seen a garden without pansies."

Betty felt rebuked.

"Well, you see," she said hastily, "you have to buy them by the plants, and they cost a good deal, you know."

"Something fierce," he agreed tactfully. "I got an uncle that's got a garden, and I'll bet he hasn't got a one. I got a new pair of shoes, these is only my old ones to play around in."

"Of course," Betty said. "You'd spoil your good ones in a very few minutes, and your mother wouldn't like that a bit, I'm sure."

A cloud passed over the boy's face.

"I ain't got a mother, and my aunt don't care, long's I don't make too much noise," he said slowly. "She don't care about nothing but noise, but my father he hates to buy shoes."

Betty bent over to hunt for a bug on a gladiolus leaf, and there was a moment's silence.

"There's a lot of difference in people," Jamie said, in a half whisper. "You don't know what it is, but they's some different. I wisht you was my mother."

Betty swallowed hard, but looked up with a quick smile.

"We can be real good friends, can't we?" she asked. "I liked you the very first minute I saw you."

That is the way it began. After that it seemed as though the walls of the house next door must be transparent, for Betty no sooner appeared in her garden than the freckled-faced boy clambered over the fence to be with her. Sometimes he chattered like a magpie, sometimes he said scarcely a word, and sometimes he brought offerings to her shrine. Once it was a pansy plant that he offered eagerly, his grimy hand extending it to her, with the rich black earth slipping between his fingers.

"Oh, Jamie, what a beauty!" Betty cried. "Did you buy that just for me?" Jamie shook his head, suddenly bashful.

"No," he said haltingly. "I found it over in the lot. Somebody must have chucked it just before I come along."

The planting of it was a ceremony, for Jamie had to help pat the earth

down, and sprinkle it gently with the small watering pot, standing off to admire it with her when all was done.

"Looks swell, don't it?" he asked gleefully. "I'll see if I can't find something else in the lot, you bet."

And he did. He found a verbena plant and two petunias. These last had been pulled up in haste, apparently, for they were rootless and useless. Betty, though she planted them without comment, must have shown a certain lack of enthusiasm, for Jamie apologized.

"I'm awful sorry they ain't got roots," he said. "If you'd lend me your trowel I'd get along a heap better. You see, I was some in a hurry."

The garden grew and flourished, and as the summer waned the reputation of it went far and wide. People came to see it, and exclaim over Betty's success with a fifty-foot city lot, and she was very proud.

"It makes one feel that the desert can be made to blossom like a rose, after all," she laughed. "I wish you could have seen this place when we first arrived on the scene of bliss."

"Things grow for you if you look at them, and I spend a mint of money trying to force mine to," the rival gardener said. "The worst of it is I can't keep anything, even when I do succeed with it. Now, I live only two doors away, and I'm robbed every day or two. I can't keep any plant after it blossoms, so we haven't had a flower in our house all summer. The boys in this neighborhood are a disgrace to civilization!"

A terrible suspicion that Betty had long tried to smother now became a certainty, and her wrath rose—oddly enough—against the innocent victim.

"You grown men are so terribly hard on boys," she said sharply. "Didn't you ever steal apples when you were a boy?"

"Apples were different," he said weakly. "And the city's different from the country. I'm going to tell the officer on our beat to watch the Mulaney boy that lives next door. I'll give him five dollars if he catches him in the act."

Betty worried over it a great deal. She felt she could not answer for the



"Do you think you'd like to help me with my garden next year?"

consequences if Jamie were arrested for stealing. She must stop him, for if she did not no one would. His aunt knew nothing of the boy, and his father would be so terribly severe that he would embitter him in case of his arrest. Betty lay awake nights, after days of apprehension, of starting at the very sight of a blue uniform, of fear that the hour had come when Jamie would not vault the fence, until finally her mind was made up. It was one day in midsummer, when the tuberose and cosmos made the garden sweet and gay, that Jamie came over the fence with a candytuft plant in his hand, his pockets bulging with apples. Without noticing

the manner with which she received his offering, he, manlike, presented an apple.

"Want one?" he asked genially. "Gee, it smells swell over here. The man on the other side of us has got tomatoes getting ripe. Like 'em?"

"No, no!" Betty cried hastily. "That is, not out here, don't you know. Not Illinois tomatoes. Indiana tomatoes are good, though."

"I don't know is these Illinois tomatoes or Indiana tomatoes," Jamie said, biting into an apple. "The man he's sicked the cop on me, and he chased me two blocks. Ain't that going some?"

Betty polished her apple on her white

sleeve, her eyes on the drooping candytuft at her feet, and Jamie regarded her anxiously.

"Bet you ain't feeling good," he said gruffly. "Ain't sick, are you?"

"No, thank you," Betty said slowly. "I was thinking about a man."

"Dead, I suppose?" Jamie suggested cheerfully. "Wisht you'd let me go to the funeral with you."

"No, he isn't dead. He was a boy like you once, only he made mistakes. Well, he—lifted things from people's yards, and he broke windows, and everything, and it got so he told so many lies nobody could believe him. Once he was arrested for just a little thing, and it seemed as though it would break my heart. You see, people called it stealing, because they didn't understand he only meant to *lift* things. You see, lifting and stealing look so much alike to people who don't understand."

Betty's voice shook, and she paused to steady it. He looked so little, and there was such a childish curve to the back he had suddenly turned to her. She wished she were his mother, that she might hug him unrebuked, and the tears came to her eyes as she looked at his manly head, and thought how small a part he had in the world's affections.

"We all know he didn't mean to be bad and tell lies," she went on softly. "But we were so ashamed because we knew he could make such a fine man of himself if he tried. He did not try, and when he grew up to be the wrong kind of a man, it made me so ashamed of my friend, and so sorry, so, so sorry."

There was a long silence; then the boy turned with a swift movement, and gathered the candytuft plant in the crook of his arm. He did not look at her when he spoke.

"Would you be ashamed," he asked, in a very low voice, "would you be ashamed if I cut it out?"

Betty choked.

"I'd be proud of you, Jamie-boy," she said. "Ever so proud."

"All right," he said hoarsely. "I'll cut it out. Will you loan me the trowel?"

Betty held out her hand, and the

small, rough hand went into it as quick as a flash. When she let it go the color flooded his face, and he turned sharply on his heel, and was gone as fast as his old play shoes would carry him—trowel, candytuft, and all.

A few weeks later the rival gardener came through the alley, and looked over the fence at Betty in the fading, frost-touched garden.

"Our fun's over for this year, I guess," he called, in passing. "I've enjoyed it more the last month or so, because there has not been a thing taken out of my yard. I tell you, there's nothing like getting the police after a boy."

Digging for bulbs, Betty made no reply, but smiled tenderly with an infinite understanding, as she gently removed a grub pinioned on the tip of her trowel. When she looked up, the rival gardener stood before her with an odd little smile on his sunburned face.

"For safety next summer," he said whimsically, "I think I'd better ally myself with the powers that prey."

Betty started.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "I guess I don't understand you."

"If you will be my partner in running my garden," the rival gardener said, "I think I shall be more apt to serve my own ends and save my plants."

"I am perfectly satisfied with my own," Betty said loftily. "Besides, your yard is too far away."

"Two doors only," replied the rival gardener. "Besides, I mean for you to live there. You see," he went on awkwardly, "at first, when I saw my plants appear in your garden I was mad, awfully mad, especially over the rosebush I lost, and you won. Then, when I found the plants came back, I—well, at first I thought it was the policeman. When I found it was you, I—well, I was awfully hard hit, that's all. Do you think you'd like to help me with my garden next year? I need you."

"Gracious!" she exclaimed, dimpling suddenly. "I should think you did! The way you let the weeds choke your morning-glories was scandalous! And besides——"



Mr. Billings treated himself to a gale of laughter.

Home Cooking

By Frank X. Finnegan

Author of "Our Noiseless Fourth," "To Oblige Bertha," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK J. MURCH

MRS. BILLINGS looked over her mother's letter for the fifth time, and sighed gently.

"I wouldn't hesitate a minute about going," she said, "if it were not for us being without a maid just now. How unfortunate that Sophy should leave the very week that mamma was taken ill."

"Nonsense!" her husband exclaimed, smiling at her over his coffee cup. "As I said before, why on earth shouldn't you go? You don't suppose I'm afraid to stay here alone a few nights, do you?"

Mrs. Billings smiled in spite of herself.

"No; but I know how you detest eating out at restaurants," she said. "I'm thinking about your meals. Some men

would be glad to get away from home cooking for a while, but I know just how it would be with you; you wouldn't eat a thing until I got home, and would probably be down sick fretting over the chances of being poisoned if you did risk a two-dollar dinner downtown. I know you!"

Mr. Billings put both his plump hands on the breakfast table, moved his chair back a bit that he might have more room to laugh, and treated himself to a gale of laughter that chased away his wife's puzzled frown of indecision.

"You bet you know me!" he roared. "You've got me about right on the restaurant proposition. I'd rather eat a piece of toast and have a cup of coffee here at home that I *knew* was all right,

than to pack away an eight-dollar-a-plate banquet that had been slathered over by the Lord knows who in some hotel kitchen. But, say! If that's all that's keeping you from going, you get ready and catch that morning train, and go and see your mother—she wants you, and the dear old lady ought to have everything she wants. Don't worry about me and my meals—I've got that matter all settled in my own mind."

"Oh, of course!" exclaimed Mrs. Billings, her brow clearing. "You can go and stop with brother Ed for a few days. Why didn't I think of that in the first place?"

"Brother Ed nothing!" announced Mr. Billings firmly. "Ed is all right, and so is Millicent; but I don't propose to settle myself down on 'em on five minutes' notice. I know what that means in any family. No, it's simpler than that. I'll cook my own meals."

"You?" exclaimed his wife. "What an idea! Why, Henry Billings! You couldn't boil water!"

"Couldn't, eh?" he laughed. "Don't you fret! I've never made any blow about it, because I never needed to since we've been married; but the things I can do when I'm turned loose in a kitchen would make you open your eyes, my lady! I haven't lived bach, and gone camping, and knocked around generally fifty years for nothing."

"Forty-eight, Henry—not fifty," corrected Mrs. Billings sharply. "But I really can't imagine you trying to cook!"

"Well, don't imagine it, then," suggested her husband, rising and crossing the room to pinch her cheek. "Don't think anything about it, but get ready and go to see your mother. That's all settled, and there's no more argument about it. I've got to meet Traynor and those fellows, and go out to look at that suburban tract to-day—probably be gone all day at that. Now, all you've got to do is to lay in a steak, or something like that from the market, and leave it in the ice box. I'll do the rest when I come home to dinner."

"But—but, Henry——" began Mrs. Billings uncertainly.

Her portly and good-natured husband cut her short.

"There are no 'buts' about it, my dear," he interrupted. "Why, I'll positively enjoy it! I haven't had a rattle with a gas range in years. The novelty of it appeals to me. If I don't hurry downtown, I'll go out there and start getting luncheon right now."

"Well, all right, then," she finally admitted; "but I do hope you'll go to Ed's if—if everything doesn't turn out all right."

Mr. Billings trailed away in an automobile to look at the new subdivision with Traynor and the other capitalists who had considered buying it; and Mrs. Billings, with many misgivings, prepared for her journey. But, despite the proud boasts and good intentions of Billings when he left home, he did not break all records getting back to the gas range and the steak when the dinner hour drew on. Instead, he suffered himself to be led away to dinner at Traynor's home, after he had indiscreetly mentioned that Mrs. Billings was out of town.

"All alone, are you?" said Traynor. "Come on up to the house and take dinner with me. I want to talk a little more about this proposition, anyhow, and we can have a cigar and a chat after dinner."

Mr. Billings thought of his empty home, of the deserted and echoing kitchen in which he had expected to perform, and of the lonely board at which he would eventually sit in state to regale himself on what culinary triumphs he might produce at the stove.

"All right!" he exclaimed, almost joyfully. "That will give us a good chance to talk. That's a good idea!"

And thereupon the automobile was headed for the Traynor establishment, and Mr. Billings, deep in a discussion of acre prices, possible extension of transportation lines, and the probable growth of the metropolis, forgot all about his burning desire to shine as a chef.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Billings reached home, and the dark, deserted atmosphere of the place almost gave him a chill. There seemed to be

something gruesome about the empty house that got on his nerves while he was mounting the steps, and he let himself in silently with his latchkey and tip-toed up the stairs to his "den," as though some one were lying dangerously ill in the house. Gee! But it was lonesome, he told himself, as he tossed his coat and hat aside, and desperately lighted a cigar—the fourth that evening.

Dropping into his easy-chair, he puffed violently, and glared at the unoffending pictures on the wall. He began to feel actually "creepy" as he realized that he was all alone in the big house; that the basement was a yawning cavern of black gloom; that the first-floor rooms were silent, dark, and empty; and that he could be robbed, murdered, and quartered up there on the top floor without being able to call his nearest neighbor.

"I'd better go to bed," he muttered. "I'm getting as nervous as an old woman. Too many cigars to-night, I suppose."

He had removed his shoes, and was thoughtfully winding his watch when something happened that made him jump two feet into the air. He heard a noise from the floor below.

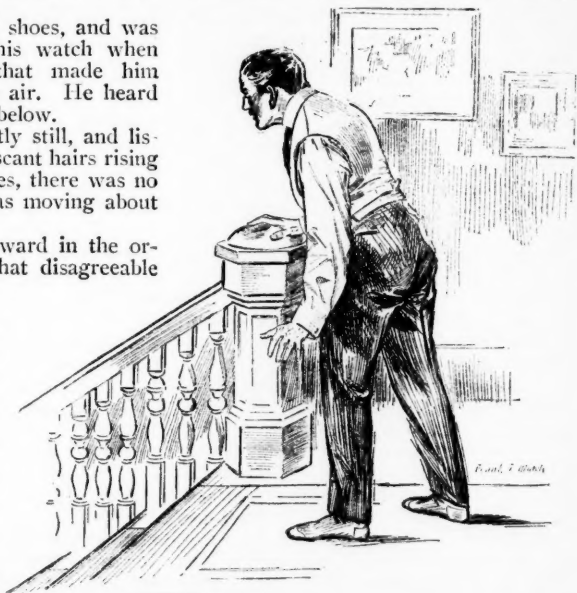
Billings stood perfectly still, and listened, while he felt his scant hairs rising on top of his head. Yes, there was no mistake. Some one was moving about downstairs.

While he was no coward in the ordinary acceptance of that disagreeable term, Mr. Billings fully realized that he was in a precarious position, and that caution should be his keynote. Some foolhardy and impetuous spirits would have rushed down the stairs on the spur of the moment to try conclusions with the intruder—or intruders, for they might be present in force of numbers.

Mr. Billings recalled instantly that a marauder bold enough to enter his house feloniously and burglariously would probably be armed, desperate, and perfectly willing to slaughter any person standing between him and freedom. Hence the swift decision to use caution, even to a degree that might be considered extreme.

Having removed his shoes before the alarming sounds had come from below-stairs, Mr. Billings was equipped for a careful reconnoiter without further preparation, and he stealthily made his way along the carpeted hall to the head of the stairs, from which point of vantage a view of the reception hall and the front door could be secured.

In that direction everything was dark and momentarily quiet. Mr. Billings, trying to assure himself that his nerves had played him a trick, and that he had not heard a noise, after all, cautiously took a step down, waited, and listened. Nothing happened, and he took another step—and another, until he had reached



He stealthily made his way along the hall to the head of the stairs.

a point where he could peer over the handrail into the black fastnesses surrounding the dining room, the butler's pantry, and the kitchen.

Emboldened by the quiet that reigned in those precincts, Mr. Billings was about to step jauntily down the remainder of the stairs and light the gas in the hallway to chase away whatever spooks might be lingering in the house, when he suddenly heard two unmistakable and heavy steps from the direction of the kitchen. Clutching the handrail with both his trembling hands, he crouched in the darkness, and stared long enough to hear a door open, and see a gleam of light flash across the floor and wall of the dining room momentarily—a dark lantern, he thought, as his legs began to shake beneath him.

Mr. Billings hurriedly started for the comparatively safe ground of the chamber floor; but as he did so, he stepped on the loose stair, which he had, somehow, missed coming down, and it creaked so loudly beneath his weight that it sounded to his terrified ears like a scream. At the same instant he heard the closing of a door in a rear room downstairs, and the turning of the key in the lock. Evidently the burglar, surprised in the midst of his depredations by discovering he was not alone in the house, had locked himself in, and determined to sell his liberty dearly.

A cold perspiration bespangled the Billings' brow as that quiet householder, creeping stealthily up the stairs and along the hallway to his "den," realized that he was shut up in the house with an unknown desperado, who, knowing he had been discovered, might resort to murder or arson in order to escape.

As he regained the lighted room, Mr. Billings' worried glance fell upon the instrument that might prove to be his savior in his hour of extremity—the telephone on his desk. Fervently he thanked the inspiration which had led him a few months before to have an "extension" wire run from the telephone in the library downstairs to his "den"—an inspiration which really had its origin in the number of times Mr. Billings had been obliged, toilfully if not

prayerfully, to convey his generous avoirdupois up and down those stairs to answer telephone calls. Now it was to serve him in good stead—perhaps to save his life. He would call the police.

Carefully Mr. Billings closed the door of the room, that no word of his conversation might reach the crouching criminal behind the locked door downstairs, and in a frightened whisper called the operator at the main office.

"Give me the police!" he murmured. "The chief of police. Headquarters. Any of 'em—only hurry."

For five seconds of agony he waited, listening with one ear for the welcome answer from headquarters, and with the other for the dreaded sound of the burglar stealthily mounting the stairs, revolver in hand. Then the sergeant at the police station answered, and Mr. Billings hurriedly poured out his tale of terror.

"Send a couple of policemen up here—quick!" he whispered. "I've got a burglar locked up in one of the rooms. Hurry! He's likely to break out any minute."

And when the sergeant had taken the address and promised immediate dispatch of a relief expedition, Mr. Billings sat down limply to wait its arrival. No further sounds were heard from below, and he wondered if the burglar had decided to wait until he had gone to bed and then slip out to safety, or if he would pause on the way to cut Mr. Billings' throat on the good old theory that dead men tell no tales. Then it suddenly occurred to him that the arrival of the police, should they dash up in a patrol wagon or ring the electric doorbell, would startle the burglar into activity with results no man might foresee, and it behooved him to slip down to the front door and admit the officers quietly.

It took some nerve to accomplish this—more nerve than the worried householder believed he had left. But he finally did, stealing down the stairs one step at a time, watching and listening for a move from the enemy, and finally gaining the front door, and cautiously opening it just as a large, bulky figure loomed up on the pavement outside.



"And is this your burglar?" demanded Detective Ryan in disgust.

"Are you Billings?" demanded the stranger. "I'm a police officer."

"Come right in," murmured the overjoyed Billings. "You're just in time. Where are the rest of the officers?" he added.

"The rest of what officers?" returned Detective Ryan. "Do you think it takes a wagon load of coppers to nail one burglar? Where is this fellow? I understand you've got him locked up."

"He's in the back room, off the kitchen, I believe," said Mr. Billings meekly. "And he's—he's got himself locked in."

"Got himself locked in?" echoed the detective, pulling out a huge revolver that looked to Billings like a stovepipe elbow. "What's the matter? Is he afraid of you?"

"Right through this hall," urged Mr. Billings, overlooking the sarcasm.

"Let's light up here and see what we're doing," suggested Officer Ryan, striking a match and lighting the gas. "Now we'll go in and get him."

Mr. Billings discreetly fell behind—

considerably behind—and the detective, lighting gas jets as he went, strode through the dining room, across the kitchen, and to the closed door of the little bedroom opening from that room. He tried the handle, holding his persuasive-looking revolver ready for instant action. The door was locked. Then he beat a thunderous tattoo on the panels.

"Open this door!" he shouted. "I'm a police officer! Open this door or I'll break it in!"

And immediately there came from the other side of the door not a revolver shot, not a surly defiance of the law, but a shriek—and an unmistakably feminine shriek.

The detective turned and stared at Billings.

"What kind of a game is this?" he demanded. "That's a woman!"

Mr. Billings swallowed hard, and advanced a few farther steps across the dining room—almost to the kitchen door.

"It sounds like it," he admitted.

Then they heard a voice—a quavering, frightened, female voice—from the locked room.

"What you want?" it inquired. "Who are you? I call the police!"

"Open that door!" ordered Ryan again. "Nobody's going to hurt you. I'm a police officer, I tell you!"

Slowly they heard the bolt of the lock turned back, and cautiously the door was opened inch by inch, disclosing a frightened blue eye just below a mop of tangled blond hair; and then, little by little, the face and form of a badly scared young woman, evidently of the servant-maid class. Mr. Billings came forward quite boldly at this apparition.

"What on earth are you doing here?" he demanded. "Where did you come from?"

"Mrs. Billings, she hire me," said the trembling maid. "I am second cook at her brother's house. I come to make your dinner, but you don't come home, and when I hear noise I think you are a burglar."

Detective Ryan turned on Mr. Billings in disgust.

"And is this your burglar?" he demanded. "Well, you're a swell one! Calling me out of bed to arrest your own servant girl!"

"But—but I don't understand," stammered Mr. Billings. "I had no maid here—I was to be all alone——"

The young woman, who was fast recovering her nerve, interrupted him.

"Mrs. Billings—she give me this note for you," she said, seizing a letter from the dresser; "but you don't ban come

home, so I think you stay out all night—I know your wife is away."

Mr. Billings hurriedly tore open the note while the detective put away his big revolver, yawned, and prepared to go back to the police dormitory to finish his nap.

This is what the amazed householder read:

DEAR HENRY: I got to worrying about your meals more and more after you left, and finally decided to ask Millicent if she couldn't spare her second cook just for a few days, so am sending you Hulda. Millicent says she is splendid; and now I will rest easy, knowing your digestion will be unimpaired, and you will not be bothered by puttering around yourself. With love,
M.

He looked up rather sheepishly when he finished the note and found the officer looking down on him with an amused smile.

"It's all right, Hulda," he said. "I'm sorry I disturbed you. I—I like wheat cakes in the morning."

Then he beckoned the policeman to the front hall, and nervously dug into his vest pocket for something that he quietly slipped into the ready fingers of the detective.

"I suppose you know how to keep your mouth shut when it's necessary," he suggested.

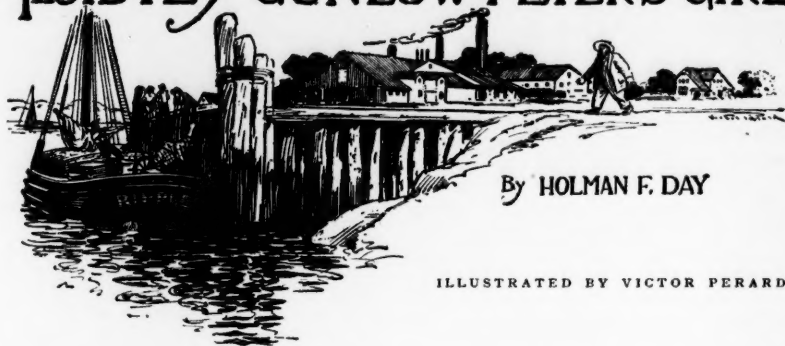
Ryan winked at him solemnly.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I'm a clam."

Then the door slammed behind him, and Mr. Billings went upstairs, with a sigh of relief, to finish winding his watch.



The IDYL of "GUNLOW PETER'S" GIRL



By HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

CAP'N AARON SPROUL had five hundred thousand bricks thrown at him all at once.

Yes, a good half million of bricks.

Just one brick can jar a man tremendously. But five hundred thousand—

Tut! Let's not be silly.

The way of it was this: Cap'n Sproul's wife, Louada Murilla, lost an old bach uncle by death, and gained his property by will. The property consisted for the most part of a brickyard—a going business. Like any faithful and loyal husband, the cap'n volunteered to lift all business burdens off Louada Murilla's shoulders. So he went down to the brickyard on the big river, and found those five hundred thousand bricks awaiting shipment on a contract that called for forfeits. As a husband who proposes to protect his wife's interests, he took off his coat, and got busy. So that's how the bricks happened to be thrown at him. There was no joke to it.

The bricks were to go into a cotton mill twenty-five miles down the river. The contract called for deliveries timed to suit the work of construction. The bricks must be turned over to the contractors on the installment plan.

When it came to a matter of economical water transportation, Cap'n Aaron Sproul was right at home.

No schooners, no barges, no towboats for him!

He hired Cap'n Peter Fritt and his stanch craft *Ripple*.

Ripple is about as broad as she is long. So is Cap'n Fritt. She is square-cornered and sag-bellied. So is Cap'n Fritt. She is built on the lines of a chopping tray. She has one mast, and a blunt jib boom, and an after house which made a comfortable home for Cap'n Fritt and his good wife for many years—until the good wife died.

They call that type of craft a "gunlow" on the big river. It's too much trouble to say "gondola."

Loaded, *Ripple* sails down river sure and slow, helped by current and ebb tide. Light, she sails up river sure and slow, catching the flood tide and the southwest wind of summer afternoons.

It's the ideal way of shipping bricks when delivery requires the installment plan.

So Cap'n Sproul, feeling a real thrill of the old days of active business along his figurative keel, put *Ripple* under written charter in iron-clad fashion, knowing the ropes of such business as an ancient mariner. Cap'n Fritt chafed his bulbous nose, and grumbled about so much red tape. But Cap'n Sproul insisted.

"Makes us all fast, taut and trig, them writings do," he declared. "You can't sneak out on me, and I can't canoodle you. I'll show you and others how to do business along this river in able, ship-

shape, and seamanlike fashion. It's full time you learned something."

So Gunlow Peter loaded *Ripple*, hoisted his patched sail, and put forth on the yellow breast of the river.

Cap'n Sproul, realizing that a going business sells to better advantage than a stalled one, wrote home to Louada Murilla that he proposed to stay on the job for a time, and show 'em how to make bricks.

One day he awoke from his absorption in that pursuit sufficiently to realize that Cap'n Fritt had been gone long enough for two voyages; and he made full allowance for *Ripple's* statuesque mode of progress, too.

He delivered to the hardy mariner a speech of that purport when the gunlow finally returned, and was wafted to her berth at the brickyard wharf.

"I've got you tied up by tight-and-fast contract, and I've got the say in this thing," affirmed Cap'n Sproul. "This ain't any contract for bricks to pave hell with."

Cap'n Fritt made surly rejoinder that he himself knew the sailing capacity of his own craft better than any one else did.

"Who do you think you're talking to—one of these clay-wallopers here?" inquired Cap'n Sproul vociferously. "I was thirty years a master mariner, and I could put sails onto one of those brick kilns, there, and tell you what it would do in a seaway. I know what your tide-set has been; and you've had wind sou'-west, and a hatful of it, ever since you've been gone. Don't you go ahead and try to tar me with a swab of lies. It won't stick."

He followed Gunlow Peter down into the cabin, a tidy and spacious apartment, and kept on talking while the surly mariner set about getting his dinner, banging the stove covers and rattling the tins.

"There's something in this world besides toting bricks," burst out the goaded Cap'n Fritt at last.

"Not for you so long as you're under charter to me."

"Charter or no charter, there is things

can come up that I've got to 'tend to—and I shall 'tend to 'em."

"If that's your stand you'd better kiss this gunlow good-by."

"Well, even if I have to do that it will be better than losing a daughter without a kiss or a good-by," shouted Cap'n Fritt desperately.

"Have you got a daughter?" went on Gunlow Peter, noting from the sudden astonishment which had silenced Cap'n Sproul that the advantage in the controversy had shifted.

Gunlow Peter faced his accuser, after slamming a cover on a pot. Cap'n Sproul was wagging his head in negation.

"You ain't in a position to make any such talk as you're making. You ain't got a daughter, hey? Well, I've got one. I'm father and mother both to her. Raised her in this cabin, me and her mother did. She stayed with me after her mother died till I put her ashore to go to school. She's all I've got in the world. They don't know—them that have never had children—what a daughter means to a man when she's smart, and handsome, and up-and-coming, and is deserving the best there is in life. And there ain't any hammer-headed, brass-buttoned dude of a tin-kittle steerer going to steal her, and spoil her life, and waste the money I've been laying by for her out of my hard earnings. Now you've got it!"

"I may have it," retorted Cap'n Sproul, "but I'm handing it right back to you. It ain't any good to me. The cover is on so tight I can't see in."

"You look to me like a fair man," pursued Gunlow Peter.

"I never scuttled any ships or kicked cripples, or beat out the brains of the widders and orphans. Outside of that I ain't bragging much," was the cap'n's conservative statement.

"Then, being a fair and a liberal man, like you say you are, you hadn't ought to blame me for what nature has put into me," declared Cap'n Fritt, slapping his breast to indicate the location of nature's deposit.

"Take it out and let's look at it, and then we'll see. If it sheds any light on

why you're sailing this gunlow like it was a brick in a puddle of Porty Reek molasses, I'll be pleased to make allowance where allowance is due."

"I've got a daughter. I've worked and saved for her. I've brought her up careful. I've got my own plans about her getting married, and, by Godfrey, I'm going to see to it that those plans are followed out."

"You say she's clipper built, modeled on good lines, and able?"

"She's the handsomest and smartest girl on this river."

"Then she's all the business one man ought to be 'tending to. You leave the wheel of one of that kind long enough to spit over the rail, and she has gybed on you! You didn't have any business contracting with me to carry brick, Fritt, when you had a girl of that sort to steer. Which job are you going to stick to?"

"I can tend to both of 'em, if you're willing to be fair to me," returned Gunlow Peter stubbornly. "All I did, Cap'n Sproul, was hang up the *Ripple* going and coming just long enough to run across country, and have a look, and make sure that the son of a brass-buttoned wappentouchit wasn't hanging around her. And that's only what a father would be expected to do."

He went to the stove, and banged the covers.

"You and this gunlow are a good deal alike, Fritt," stated Cap'n Sproul severely. "You sail backward about as well as you do forward. Now, come around onto the starboard tack, and head straight. Who is this chap?"

"From the time that girl of mine was able to toddle the deck of this gunlow, Cap'n Sproul, the flirting renegades on the boats of this river have waved their hands and thrown kisses to her. The bigger she grewed the more they throwed. They ain't the right kind of fellows for a girl to marry, Cap'n Sproul. I know 'em. They're here to-day, and there to-morrow. They're natural rovers. They ain't true to a wife or a sweetheart. It ain't their disposition. They kiss, and run from port

to port. I says to myself my girl ain't going to marry one of that kind, to be fooled by him. I've been in the seafaring life with seafaring men, and I didn't propose to have her follow after me in this life."

"Meaning by seafaring life this here?" inquired Cap'n Sproul, jabbing a gesture to indicate the *Ripple*.

"Sarcasm is understood," returned Cap'n Fritt; "but it ain't peaked enough to stick into *me*. This life ain't a life on shore in a cozy house, with vines around it, and a garden out back, and a husband who's home every night working in the garden and tending out on his home as he should be, instead of gallivanting around barrooms and dance halls. That's the kind of a home and a husband my girl is going to have. Inshore, and away from this river, and the renegades on it! I know 'em. I've watched 'em. And the worst of the lot is that brass-buttoned whelp who has been chasing her the hardest. He's the first mate on the Boston steamer. He's the one I'm a-watching. It was off with his monkey-doodle cap, and a wave of his hand, and a kiss throwed, every time he passed this gunlow till I sent her inshore. And he has been following her up. First to one aunt's where I had placed her. He wheedled that aunt around. And he has wheedled three more aunts."

"It's lucky you started in with a good stock of them aunts," remarked the cap'n. "They must be running low by this time."

"She is with one now who can't be wheedled," said Gunlow Peter savagely. "But that aunt ain't anything but a woman, and she needs help. And so I held up the *Ripple*, and dropped across lots, and took a look."

"Catch him?"

"No; but he has been there, trying to lallygag when he has had his lay-off. I've told you the facts of this thing, Cap'n Sproul. I'm a father, and my girl ain't going to be scooped up by a river renegade who throws kisses all the way up and down this river—and Gawd only knows what he does when he gets to swelling around Boston with his brass



"You and this gunlow are a good deal alike, Fritt."

buttons. I want you to be fair with me."

"What does your girl say about this chap?"

"It doesn't make any difference what she says. A girl eighteen years old ain't in the way of knowing what I know about men. She can't judge. She ain't a-going to marry any man off'm this river. My mind is made up. It ain't this one or that one—it's the whole of 'em—them steamboat men. Damn 'em, I hate 'em! It's woof-woof of their old whistle, and get out of the way or be run down. They don't think a sail vessel has got any rights on this river. They cut a corner on you, and grin when they go shaving past. Grin! And most like heave a cud of tobacco at you. I hate the whole tribe. I have had to fight 'em all the years I've been on this river. And now one of 'em ain't going to catch my girl, and spend my money after I'm dead. No, sir!"

Cap'n Sproul fingered his nose, and surveyed the raging master of the *Ripple*. Cap'n Sproul understood. The rancor of years of the natural warfare between the humble skippers of the scows and the lordly masters and mates

of the steamers which shouldered their important way up the narrow channel had here found full expression. Cap'n Fritt owned a treasure which one of these hated autocrats desired. With the whole strength of his nature he was resolved to pay back some of the long-standing score.

But Cap'n Sproul, having learned the facts of the feud, was not interested further.

"Look here, Fritt, all this is about as important to me as an oil chromo would be on the end of a scuttle-butt. I'm interested in getting bricks down this river. Probably that first mate is just the right husband for your girl; but instead of thinking about her you are thinking about the times when you have had to hug shore and let a steamer go past. Well, a steamer has got to get past, hasn't it? You've got to use some common sense about right of way. Hold on! I've had enough of that talk about being a father, and having your plans! I've got some plans of my own. This scow is chartered, and I've got you tied up. You try to beat me on a straight contract, and I'll have your ha'slet."

He marched out of the cabin, leaving

Cap'n Fritt banging the stove covers and speechless with rage.

In the little office of the brickyard Cap'n Sproul studied his contract with the bricks. He discovered that the next load was nearly due down river. Fritt's delay would cost the shipper dearly in the way of a forfeit unless mighty prompt action were taken.

The cap'n put all his brickyard hands onto the stevedore job. He worked them by lantern light. In early morning the *Ripple* was loaded and, while Fritt and his grimy foremast hand were getting the mainsail up, Cap'n Sproul came aboard, his little satchel in his hand.

"You've got a passenger for this trip, Fritt," he announced grimly, when the master came aft to cast off.

"I ain't sure as I want one. There's nothing about any passenger business in that contract of mine."

"Mebbe not. Call me a guardeen, then."

"There's no call for any guardeen aboard here."

"Look-a-here, Fritt! We have got just twenty-three hours to get these bricks to where they're going. If they ain't there I lose. There are two six-hour tide-sets against us. There won't be any wind after sunset. It's going to take some fine figgering to get us there—and I'm going to be aboard to do the figgering. Cast off, bow and aft," he called to his men on the wharf.

The breeze of dawn was swelling the big sail. Cap'n Sproul twirled the wheel, and the gunlow began to pull away into the stream.

"I don't allow orders to be given off aboard my own vessel by any one but myself," blustered Cap'n Fritt.

"Grab in, and give 'em off yourself, then, before some one else has a chance to do it," suggested the cap'n serenely. "When it is time to give off orders, then is the time to be giving off orders. Twenty-three hours, Fritt! No time to be fooling about orders. Give 'em off yourself, or it will be done for you."

Cap'n Fritt clicked his teeth like an angry bat, but he did not dare to display more rebellion.

He put his hand on the wheel.

"You needn't bother, Fritt. I'll enjoy a trick at the tiller. This is pretty stogy sailing for a deep-water chap, but perhaps I can squeeze a little fun out of it. I'll tell you what you can do—go below and cook up a good, hearty breakfast. I haven't had mine."

"And there ain't nothing in that contract, either, about my pot-walloping for you," shouted the exasperated Fritt.

"Don't have to be. Any man who's a gent won't let company go hungry."

Fritt went below, muttering.

With the river current and an ebb tide swirling along her ancient planking, the *Ripple* made fair progress, so Cap'n Sproul was glad to note.

He went down to breakfast when Fritt called him, and ate with zest. His affairs seemed to be moving very handsomely, now that he was attending to them himself. The grimy man had been left at the wheel.

"I'll tell you this, Fritt," said Cap'n Sproul, filling his pipe before leaving the table. "I reckon you're making a mistake about that girl of yours. She probably wants the mate of that steamer, or else the mate wouldn't be hanging around so much. The trouble with you is, you've gone daffy on this matter of steamboat men. It has got onto your nerves. You ain't capable of judging. Chances are this mate is just the right sort of a chap to make a good husband. Do you know anything against his personal character?"

"He's one of 'em—that's enough,"

"Oh, I've been living on shore among the farmers for quite a spell, and I want to tell you that farmers don't stack up alongside seafaring men who get to be officers. After a honeymoon of about two days a farmer expects his wife to wrastle a cook stove from daylight till dark. Take a steamboat officer, and he's more or less of a gent. I've always found 'em so."

"If that's the way you feel about 'em, you ought to sail a gunlow on this river, same as I've been doing the past forty years," declared the irreconcilable Fritt. "Furthermore, there's got to be a line

drawn somewhere between your business and mine!"

"Meaning?"

"You start in by running *me*—then you grab holt and run my gunlow, and now you're taking over my girl. I'm a short-tempered man, and I've stood about as much as I propose to stand."

"I know what it is to have a short temper, Fritt," agreed the cap'n amiably. "You and me is alike. It would be kind of mussy business if both of us should get mad at the same time. And I get mad after about so much talk has been made to me."

He puffed his pipe for a time, staring into the blinking eyes of Cap'n Fritt, and then went on deck, and took the wheel away from the foremast man.

The breeze was fresher, and a comforting gurgle under the old craft's counter told that she was slipping along at a good rate.

After a time Fritt poked up his head from the companionway, coming to throw overboard a dish of refuse from the breakfast table.

"I tell you again," said Cap'n Sproul, "you have let this steamboat business get onto your nerves too much. Some of the finest gents in the world are steamboat officers."

"Have I got anything to say at all about handling this gunlow this trip?" inquired the master acridly.

"Say anything you want to," returned Cap'n Sproul, blandly but noncommittally.

"Then this is what I say right now. Just ahead of us is the Swanset dredged channel—three miles of it. The boat from Boston has got into the river, and is about due along here now. If you keep on and meet it in that dredged channel, them gents you are talking about will mebbe get out, and lift up their steamboat, and let you sail past—and then again they may not."

Fritt made this suggestion in very offensive fashion. The cap'n did not like the tone.

"If them buoys ahead there show the channel, then there's plenty of room for her and for us."

"There *would* be, providing every

man in the pilot house of that steamer wasn't a hog. But I'm telling you all over again they only want an excuse to run down anything they think they can smash. And if you let 'em catch us in that channel, they've got the excuse."

But Cap'n Sproul, conscious that he must use every moment of that ebb tide if he was to make the trip in the required time, was not in the mood to anchor at the head of the dredged channel, and wait for the Boston boat.

"Handle your ship right, obey pilot rules, claim your right of way as a sailing craft, and you'll find seafaring men are gents in all circumstances, Fritt. The trouble with you river fellows is you don't know the rules."

Cap'n Fritt did not reply. He was staring south. Over the treetops trailed a ragged banner of smoke. It was the war pennant which had stirred the combativeness of his soul for many years. The Boston boat was coming.

However, in all those years, Gunlow Peter had been obliged to temper his combativeness with the caution of the under dog.

It was plain that Cap'n Sproul did not intend to anchor. He headed the *Ripple* for the buoys which marked the dredged channel.

"It ain't sense—it ain't reason," protested Cap'n Fritt. "That devilish old white duck wallers straight up the middle of that channel."

"Let her waller! There's pilot laws in these United States of America, even if you never heard of 'em, Fritt. I'm a sailing craft. I'm with the current, I'm passing with helm a-port. And you needn't think but what steamboat men know the rules of the road. When they see another fellow who knows 'em you'll find that he'll get fair treatment."

Around the bend below them the great steamer poked her lofty bow. She seemed too much of a leviathan for the narrow river. Her white sides loomed, tier above tier of decks, and the morning sunlight caromed from windows, deadlights, and brasswork. She grunted one long, surly, gruff growl.

"That means 'Keep out of my way, you low-lived, missabul river critters,'"



"Have I got anything to say at all about handling this gunlow this trip?" inquired the master acridly.

translated Cap'n Fritt, his knowledge of the code inspired by his years of settled hatred. "That's what they say when they toot that whistle. That's what they mean."

"Oh, it has only got onto your nerves," commented Cap'n Sproul condescendingly. "'Mind your helm,' says she. 'Keep over on your side, and I'll keep on mine.' The trouble with you, Fritt, you've only nursed a grudge instead of studying rules."

Gunlow Peter went to the side, and wrathfully pounded his dish to dislodge the last remnants of the refuse.

"Seeing that I'm only considered the pot-walloper aboard my own vessel," he said, "and seeing that you know it all, and can get along so lovely with them critters, I'll go below and wash dishes while the thing happens. And I warn you that you needn't call on me when you get into the mess. I shan't come up till she begins to sink. So you needn't call on. It all happens under protest, so far's I'm concerned."

"And after you get your dishes washed you can set down to your knitting, provided you've got any fancywork of that kind under way," Cap'n Sproul called after him. "I don't need you up here, I can tell you that."

11

The grimy foremast hand had been listening, perched on the rail like an alarmed fowl. He followed Gunlow Peter below, clattering down the companion stairs. A moment later he came up, a battered canvas valise in his hand.

"Thinking of starting somewhere on a honeymoon trip?" inquired Cap'n Sproul, with sarcasm.

"I'll be ready to swim ashore with what few trinkets of mine a poor man can't afford to lose," stated the man despondently. "It ain't never been done on this river, what you're settin' out to do. It never can be done."

"You keep your eye peeled, then, and you'll see something brand-new."

"I'll have to warn ye that I shall be a witness against you when this thing gets into court," said the man. "I've promised Cap'n Fritt just now. You took his own boat away from him. He's goin' to make you pay."

"It's plain to me," stated Cap'n Sproul, as much to himself as to the man, "that a little general education in navigating matters is needed on this river. I ought to have been called in on the job before."

He squinted at the buoys, and took his course carefully. He displayed due



He flung his canvas bag into the turbid flood, and dove over the side.

deference to the superior bulk of his rival. That much is required even of a sailing craft with right of way. The black buoys were on his starboard, for he was leaving port, according to nautical parlance. He left the first buoy, with five feet to spare—and considered that was close sailing enough.

The big steamer hooted staccato warning—four gruff bellows.

"Toot away, you old grampus," muttered the cap'n. "You've got ten clear fathoms of room, and I ain't going to steer ashore and sail on the dew."

He held his course, shaving the next black buoy a little closer, and plumed himself on his dexterity.

Four more toots—gruffer and angrier. At the sound Cap'n Fritt, below, slammed stove covers vigorously.

"If all I'm hearing was set to music, it would make quite a tune," mused the cap'n. "It must be a funny kind of a life they've been leading on this river. If there ain't any such things as pilot rules here I'll see what the department of commerce has got to say about it."

The great steamer was holding right in the middle of the channel. She was not giving way an inch. The keen eyes of Cap'n Sproul noted that this obstinacy would not allow room for the *Ripple* in the channel. He also saw that on the other side of the black buoys the sandy shallows were very near the surface. There was no depth of water there suitable for a brick-laden gunlow.

He set his teeth, and kept on. As an old master mariner, he felt that the protecting regis of the pilot rules protected him as long as he did his own part.

He could hear the pulsating roar of the huge side paddles now. If anything—so his eyes told him—the steamer was holding to port instead of swerving toward her starboard buoys, and giving him fairway. It was manifest intention to crowd him.

"Take that megaphone," he commanded the apprehensive foremast hand. One hand was on the wheel; the other pointed to the warped megaphone which hung in the companionway. "Tell 'em to port their hellum."

The steamer was now near enough for a hail.

"Port your hellum!" piped the wee voice of the frightened scowman.

"What are you trying to do—court a girl in the front parlor?" asked the cap'n. "Yell up, you blastnation cricket, yell up!"

"Port your hellum!" quavered the man, no louder than before.

The enormity of this presumption—this daring to give orders from a scow

—a despised river vagrant—to a lordly steamer fresh in from the high seas, paralyzed his vocal cords.

"I'm scared!" he wailed. "She's a-going to bunt us!"

Cap'n Sproul yanked the megaphone out of the trembling hand.

"Hard over to port!" he roared.

He got four sharp whistle toots for reply.

"Mind your pilot rules, you channel hogs!"

The foaming bow did not swing.

"You hit us, and you'll wish you hadn't!" screamed the cap'n. "We've got bricks!"

He heard the faint clang of one bell. That meant that the last remark might have had some effect. They had rung for half speed.

"I'll show 'em," blustered Cap'n Sproul.

But his satisfaction was short-lived. He had been paying too much attention to the megaphone. He had been taking the black buoys with too narrow a margin. During his absorption the *Ripple* headed up a fraction. Her blunt jib boom fouled the next buoy. The buoy—a spar—thrust itself among the dangling ropes, and through the sail. As though she were frightened, herself, the *Ripple* caught at the straw thus opportunely presented, and clutched with her snarled ropes. The straw was a strong one—a long, sturdy trunk of a tree, which was anchored to the river bed by a granite block imbedded in the muck. The *Ripple* surged slowly against her tether, sagged back, and swung around across the channel.

Another bell aboard the big steamer—a bell that was rung viciously, followed instantly by two more clangs, and then the nervous clatter of the "jingle." Full speed astern!

Never was there such a riot of churning in that channel before. Only the fact that she had been running at half speed saved the steamer from ramming the scow—and a scow loaded with bricks is not to be rammed with impunity even by a battleship. There was no doubt about the anxiety of those on the steamer to avoid molesting the hum-

ble *Ripple*. The paddles beat the river into froth as a housewife beats cream for pies. Deck hands ran forward, and hurriedly lowered huge rope-yarn bumpers over the bow. The yeasty waves swept up the river, and splashed over the sides of the *Ripple*.

It was too much for the nerves of the grimy foremast hand.

He yelled his fears, flung his canvas bag into the turbid flood, and dove over the side. In spite of Cap'n Sproul's close attention to other matters just then, he noted from a corner of his eye that the foremast hand was a good swimmer. He splashed away toward shore in most spirited style, butting his head against his valise.

It was touch and go between the *Ripple* and her mighty antagonist. The roaring paddles dug deeply. Her walking beam surged madly. Cap'n Sproul leaned on the rail, and watched the towering bow loom above him as she came on.

Cap'n Fritt started to come on deck at the last moment, a plate and a dish cloth in his hand. But a hasty glance through a dingy deadlight showed him that the steamer had at last got control of the parlous situation. She had managed to stop, with her shearwater not two feet from the *Ripple's* weather-worn side.

"Now you can go ahead, and swap ideas on navigating with your gentlemanly friends," Cap'n Fritt called up the companionway. "I shan't come on deck to be insulted. Get out of it the best way you can. I shan't turn a hand to help."

Cap'n Aaron Sproul had no breath to waste on any such small ammunition as Fritt just then. Away up aloft, leaning over the bow of the steamer, was a man with brass buttons and a gold-laced cap—a young man, but one who had evidently made a long study of anathema in a short life. Cap'n Sproul was silent for a time. It was worth listening to—the young man's efforts. There were certain terms of expression the cap'n had never heard on the high seas in his deep-water days. Evidently certain terms of blistering vituperation were reserved exclusively for river use.

But finally the repetition of "moss-faced old bullfrog in a puddle" got upon Cap'n Sproul's nerves.

He leaned far out, and peered under the dingy sail.

"Look-a-here, you gilt-gilled shrimp of a skinnamadoodle," he roared, "who are you talking to about puddles? I had been around Cape Horn ten times as master of my own vessel before they got done feeding you anise water for the colic."

"I don't know who you are. I don't care who you are," retorted the man above. The *Ripple* had no distinguishing marks. She was like all the other gunlows on the river. Had the face of Cap'n Fritt showed above the rail, he would have been recognized undoubtedly by the men of the steamer. "I don't want to know who you are. All I want to know is what you're doing here in this channel, blocking the way of the Boston boat?"

"I'm here tending to my own business—holding my own course, and with the right of way as a sailing vessel."

"Right of way, you old back-lot squash! You're in a dredged channel, obstructing navigation."

"Did you think I thought I was in a meetin'house aisle, you spike-horn dude, you? I know what a dredged channel is. You could hold over close to them red buoys, and have a full fathom of clear water under your keel. Instead of that you hogged the middle. I'll have you before the department for this."

"Say, I've got no time to waste on you. Get out of our way!"

"Back up, and take your own side of the river, if you want to get past here. I'm inside my rights. You ain't talking to any back-lot squashes, either."

The gilt-laced young man was hailed from the pilot house of the steamer.

The voice asked a profane question.

"I don't know who he is, captain," returned the young man. "Only some old rube with clay in his whiskers and a load of bricks." He leaned over, and addressed Cap'n Sproul once more: "This for you, you infernal old hen-coop janitor! Stay in your brickyard,

and let some one sail this scow who knows how. This river is no place for farmers. If I catch you on it again I'll throw you ten miles inshore."

He hailed the pilot house:

"Give her two or three lengths astern. We'll have to let this old scow swing with the tide."

The bell clanged, and the big steamer crawfished slowly.

"Don't you call me a farmer!" the infuriated Cap'n Sproul was yelling. "I've sailed more years on deep water than you've got hairs in that catfish mustache of yours. You don't know the rules of the road aboard that old tin teakettle of yours. The only way you've ever got along, you brass-plated imitation of a dogvane, is by having better men keep out of your way. I'll show you a few things on this river before I get done with you."

"Go hoe your cabbages, you old hair mattress," retorted the young man, with spirit. "You never saw salt water except in a pork barrel."

The *Ripple* was swinging, and, as the steamer retreated, the scow lay with her stern down river, and still moored to the buoy.

"Fifty dollars fine for making fast to a government buoy," jeered one of the deck hands.

"And I'll report you for it," cried the incensed officer. "You get under our bows again, and you'll get yours handed to you, good and plenty."

When the steamer forged past him, the cap'n stared up at the row of grinning faces along her rail. All the passengers had been drawn out by the disturbance. He heard the remarks which were made by the scoffers. The officer had pitched the key of their comments; they all made biting references to Cap'n Sproul's looks, his ability to sail a boat, and suggested that he ought to be back on the farm. The young officer trotted the length of the steamer, along the port rail, and flung a few parting insults over the stern as the huge craft gathered speed.

Cap'n Sproul turned at last from his survey of the retreating enemy. He had run forward to shake his fists, and



"That's Seth coming back," advised Fritt, gazing under his palm.

express his own opinion of the mental and physical make-up of steamboat men.

Cap'n Fritt had emerged from his retirement, and was gloomily regarding his supercargo.

"Well," blazed Cap'n Sproul, "if you've got anything to say, go ahead and say it!"

"I haven't got any original remarks to offer," stated Gunlow Peter. "I've just found out that I ain't in your class so far as original remarks go. So I'll simply quote one remark you let fall to-day: 'Take a steamboat officer, and he's more or less of a gent,' says you. If I was asked to offer another remark, I should quote again: 'You have let this steamboat business get onto your nerves too much,' says you. 'Steamboat officers are some of the finest gents in the world,' says you."

Cap'n Sproul was half back to the companionway where Cap'n Fritt was standing. He was treading along the deck load. He stooped, and picked up a brick.

"You throw another one of them things back at me," stated he, "and I'll throw this brick. You've had fair warning. Go ahead!"

After a moment of sullen silence, Cap'n Fritt took courage.

"An original thought has occurred to me. It might interest you, Cap'n Sproul."

The cap'n lowered the poised brick.

"The fellow who was just doing that fancy talking to you is named Willis Dove," said Fritt, encouraged to speak.

The cap'n dropped his brick, and came aft, showing interest.

"He is first mate of that steamer."

Greater display of interest.

"He's the scalloped-edge, devilish sneak who has been trying to steal my daughter. He's a good, fair specimen of the lords of Argyle who think they own this whole river. He is the kind I've been up against all my life. And still you turn around, and browbeat me, and wipe your feet on me, and tell me I ought to pass her over to him, and let him spoil her life, and waste my money I've worked so hard to earn."

"I never said any such thing," insisted Cap'n Sproul.

"I've got a blamed good memory. You said that a first mate was probably just the right kind of a husband for her."

"You want to dull the edge of that

memory of yours, Fritt, or I'll take and do it for you with a brick. I've got you sized up. You're working out your grudge on me, and I ain't in any frame of mind just now to stand for it. You heard what that blue-faced son-of-an-organ-monkey said to me just now, didn't you?"

Gunlow Peter pulled out a tattered and grimy notebook, and shook it under Cap'n Sproul's nose.

"I wrote down the most of it. I ain't no ways glib with a pencil, but I caught a good deal of the hottest of it. Thinks I to myself: 'He may forget what that first mate said. He may be so busy talking himself he ain't catching what the mate is saying.' If you've forgot any of it, here it is. I'll read it to you."

"You needn't bother," returned Cap'n Sproul grimly. "I don't need to have that stuff rubbed into me by you. But I've got something to say to you right now, Fritt. I started out to get bricks down this river. I shall keep on getting bricks down this river. But as my principal side line of business I've took up that Dove, and he's going to lose some feathers. And I'll be perfectly frank with you, and say that this matter of your girl looks different to me than it did before. I'm now in a frame of mind to think a little less about bricks and quick trips, and more about busting up any deal where that critter expects to make good. Do you think he is particularly hard hit with your girl? Is it going to fuss him up a lot if he doesn't get her?" he asked anxiously.

Fritt dragged a letter from his breast pocket, and pressed it into the cap'n's hands.

"It's the last one he wrote her. Them other aunts have been letting her get 'em. But this last aunt she can't be wheedled. She got hold of this letter. You read it. You can see he's all in about her. And why shouldn't he be? She's the——"

But Cap'n Sproul paid no heed to the fond father's panegyrics. He was reading the letter. It seemed to give him much satisfaction.

He folded it, and gazed on the father cheerfully.

"I've got to say I never read a love letter where the fellow seems to be so bad off. Says he can't eat nor sleep since she has been took away where he can't see her. Says he'll die of love if he can't look into her eyes pretty soon, and tell her how much he thinks of her." The recital of these sentiments appeared to afford the cap'n much additional satisfaction. The spoken word seemed to make the conditions more certain. "Says he will go again and crawl at your feet."

He looked at Fritt.

"That wasn't crawling at your feet—that language he used here a little while ago, when your scow got into his way."

"All scows look alike to them fellows. And he didn't see me. If he had knowed it was my gunlow, he'd have run her down and drowned me, so that he could get my girl and my money. That's the stripe of them steamboat men. No, sir, I didn't let him see me."

"This letter encourages me a good deal," the cap'n assured his new ally. "Fritt, I have been abused a whole lot in my day. I have had men call me a whole lot of names. But when a brass-buttoned swab sticks his head out over the rail of a steamer, and calls me the names that critter did, in the hearing of a lot of passengers—and me a deep-water man inside my full right—then he'll get what's coming to him. You happen to be placed mighty favorable in this matter." He patted the letter, and passed it back to Fritt. "The rope is around his weasen in mighty good shape. All is, I'll grab in, and help you twist. And to wipe out any hard feelings you have been entertaining, I'll say I take back what I said about being late last trip. You had good reasons."

Cap'n Fritt grasped the outstretched hand with the air of one who has been aggrieved, has been finally vindicated, and is inclined to be patronizing and forgive.

"Every father knows his own business best," he stated, hankering to give the cap'n a last prod.

"Let go of the root now, Fritt," advised Cap'n Sproul. "It's been chewed enough. You and me will get along fine

if you don't twit. I say, I'm with you. There's no man ever talks to me like that man talked to me, and then goes off, and marries a girl, and lives happy ever after—not if I can stick out my foot and trip him."

The *Ripple*, though her old sail belied, was still held by the buoy. Cap'n Sproul took swift survey of the situation. He saw a skiff coming away from the shore. One man was standing up, and a man was rowing. The garments of the man who stood up glistened as though he had been wet.

"That's Seth coming back," advised Fritt, gazing under his palm. "He has jumped overboard half a dozen times when we've got into a pinch. Jumps overboard, and swims ashore."

"It's a wonder more sailors don't think of doing that when there's need of saving themselves," remarked Cap'n Sproul dryly. "I've known of deep-water fellows, out in the middle of the ocean, going right down with the ship, instead of swimming back to dry land."

He stalked to and fro beside the wheel until the recreant foremast hand was again on deck, and had dismissed his boatman.

"Leastways, you've got to allow I can swim," remarked the man, not relishing the look in the cap'n's eyes.

"So can a black-and-tan dog. You get forward, there, and clear that hamper."

A few minutes later the *Ripple* was freed, and Cap'n Sproul maneuvered her around into the wind, and the voyage was resumed.

"I didn't realize that a fellow who talked as that first mate talked would have such a tender spot in him to step on," he mused complacently. "He

looked down over that rail all so proud and gay. Didn't know who he was spitting on, eh? I ain't naturally of a savage nor revengeful disposition, but when another sailorman says before witnesses that I don't know my business when I'm a-holt of a tiller and on my course, then he's liable to run against trouble. Fritt, suppose you take this wheel, and head as she's going. Hand over that letter again. Considering what's liable to happen, it makes a good deal more refreshing reading for me than a last year's almanac."

He lighted his pipe, and perused the outpourings of the heart of First Mate Dove with fresh interest and complete relish.

"Look-a-here, Fritt," he burst out finally, "are you in any ways sure of this latest aunt who is taking her trick at the wheel?"

"She's a corncracker," Fritt assured him.

"Well, we'll have to look into it, Fritt. I don't propose to take any chances."

Cap'n Fritt blinked at his late severe critic.

The critic had suddenly become even more zealous than Cap'n Fritt himself.

"We'll get these bricks down, and then we'll have a look, my man. It ain't safe to take any chances where women are concerned."

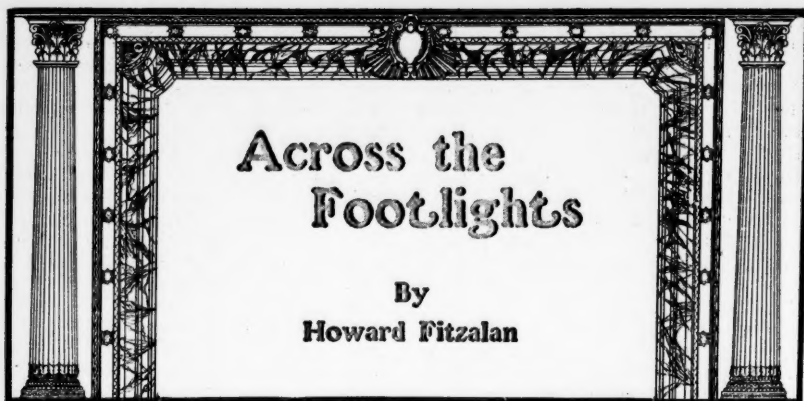
"That's the way I figgered last trip," said Fritt.

But Cap'n Sproul did not retort. He smoothed any sudden resentment by reading the letter again.

"Yes, sir, it's an awful soft spot," he reflected joyously. "And when I get my foot placed, and step on that spot, the squawk will be worth listening to."

[In the July number of SMITH'S will appear another story, in which the matter of Cap'n Sproul's feud and Mate Dove's wooing will be related.]





Across the Footlights

By
Howard Fitzalan

WHEN Oliver Twist, long ago, said, "I'm such a little boy," in extenuation of some fancied mischief he had done, our hearts went out to him, and we followed his adventures, hating Noah Claypole and the Sowerberrys, and rejoicing when frail, slight, little Oliver sent the hateful charity boy sprawling, and, fearing for the eleven-year-old child—just our own age—who set so boldly forth to seek his fortune.

And *what* adventures, among *such* people! Will ever any of us forget how poor Oliver was accused of stealing the handkerchief from Mr. Brownlow, how that kind gentleman rescued him from cruel Fang, the magistrate, and took him to that cheerful home of his with the great curtains, the polished brasses, and the family portraits; how he trusted Oliver to go an errand with a ten-pound note, scorning Grimwig, of "Eat-my-head" fame, who declared he would never come back?

And when Nancy Sikes met poor little Oliver around the corner, and carried him off to Fagin's den again, against his will, how we sorrowed for him, knowing kind Mr. Brownlow would misjudge him!

And then the hurried panorama of dark deeds—the burglary at Chertsey, in which Bill Sikes forced Oliver to take a hand; Oliver's wound; Nancy's

plea to Rose Maylie to protect the boy from the evil fate planned by that arch-conspirator, Monks, through the Jew and the housebreaker; their meeting on the stairway by London's dark water, with the great arch of the bridge above them, its lamps glowing too dimly in the fog to reveal the presence of the spy who crouched near by and listened; the murder of poor Nance; the flight of her murderer; his surrounding at Jacob's Island by a tumultuous mob shouting for his blood; and then that picture of him flattened out against the black wall, a thin line of rope from his neck to a higher chimney pot; the end of Fagin, the red-haired Jew fence, shrieking in his cell.

Is there any book of our childhood in which many events and many people stand out so clearly? The Artful Dodger, Charlie Bates, Bumble, the Beadle, Toby Crackett, Giles, and "the boy," and, over all—heavy-jowled and thick-calved, his murderous, slinking dog at his heels, his heavy blackthorn in his hand—that menace to all youngsters who were thinking of running away—Bill Sikes.

These events and people seemed nearer in the days of our childhood, when open fires still burned in every one's library, when gas and lamps had not been superseded by electric light, and one still traveled in horse busses, in

pony chaises, and, sometimes, stage coaches, for motors were not yet known.

More remote now, they still retain peculiar charm for all who can lose themselves completely in Storybook Land; and all of them, with the true Dickens' optimism and picturesque Dickens' gloom, stand to-day revived on the boards of New York.

Every detail that one can remember from the book is in the massive production of many scenes, from the Maylie rose garden to London Bridge stairs, the latter so huge, so dark, so heavy, that a cold chill seemed to come from it, sweeping over the water with its rocking, moored boats, to the audience, while in the half light poor Nance cowered and trembled as she told her bitter story. And Nance she was, and no play actress. Constance Collier made her real, artificial periods and all; just as giantlike Lyn Harding chilled one as Bill Sikes, in just the way you remembered being chilled when you were first introduced to him by firelight. And Fagin, crafty, hateful, but sardonically humorous old blackguard! Were you ever more thoroughly understood and delineated than by Nat Goodwin to-day? And Oliver, pathetic little Oliver, with Marie Doro's plaintive eyes and wistful voice; no boy could ever have captured your charm so completely.

It is a marvelous production, this J. Comyns-Carr dramatization of Dickens' novel, that by the kindness of George Tyler—who is Liebler & Company—we have been permitted to see almost exactly as it was done after months of painstaking care and research, by Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree in London. To the smallest bit—such as Giles' "boy"—the characters were as true to themselves as in Dickens' manuscript. If there is any one with one spark of love for the great master of tears and laughter, let him go hastily to see "Oliver Twist."

There was once an age that never was. It was, in the minds of many, the Golden Age. It was not in actual history. Yet it had its historians, such historians as history never had; for one is

quite certain old Sir Thomas Mallory believed in the King Arthur of whom he wrote in the Norman-French tragedy that bears that monarch's name. Ancient Froissart, also, in his chronicles, has much to say of those Knights of the Round Table, who went about in search of dragons, princesses in duress, and a certain Holy Grail from which Our Lord had drunken at that last supper. Lancelot of the Lake, the saintly Galahad, the alluring Queen "Guinevere hight," Merlin the Magician, dark and dour, and many knightly adventurers and gallants, whom, I dare say, we may take more as embodiments and personifications of abstract principles than folk of flesh. Warwick Deeping has said his say of days like these in his graceful *romant* concerning the loves of Uther and Igraine, a tale whose sister Maurice Hewlett wrought in "The Forest Lovers," in that emblazoned style of his, as redolent of romance as the casque and cuirass of those selfsame knights, while Howard Pyle and a host of lesser lights have wrought also tales more simple for younger readers.

The other side of the shield came in for the rich and rare satire of our own Mark Twain, retelling these old narratives from the standpoint of a humanitarian Yankee set down by magic-carpet means in those realms of old romance, to find the vile, shameful wolf's head of poverty and degradation under all the Arthurian gallantries. This New Englander pricked the purple, iridescent bubble of chivalry, with its concomitants of monkery and autocratic kingcraft, with the proletarian keenness of a nineteenth-century workingman, to whom knowledge was more divine than a fatuous assumption of impeccability in a king, and true Christian charity was more noble than seeking far and wide for a Sacred Cup, while riding down on the way those little children of the poor, beloved by Him who drank from it.

Edmond Rostand's romance of the Golden Age, "La Princesse Lointaine," or "Lady of Dreams," as Mr. Louis N. Parker adapts it, although more properly speaking of her as "The Remote

Princess" in the play proper, was greeted by an audience of Americans who had read their Mark Twain. Does one consider this play altogether from the standpoint of that famed Connecticut Yankee, then indeed is all lost; but in that purple haze of lost romance, where sails of white samite floated above golden argosies, it seems as it should be that *Prince Geoffrey* should have listened to those tales of the palmers from Antioch, who brought news of a Byzantine princess, wondrous fair to look upon, and with hair like spun silk, who gave to each a tall white lily, and bade them keep their hearts as white. So, hearing this of her, *Geoffrey*, with his lute, and many songs within his heart, sang praises of the princess, giving to her, in the fashion of lovers of all time, the attributes of perfect womanhood entire; and, when a desperate sickness attacked him, and his leeches spoke to him sadly, telling him that the waving of black wings above him alone could cool his fever, he, nevertheless, fought as single-handed a battle with oncoming death as he had in any tournament or tilting yard, and refused to assoult his soul until he should see the Lady of Dreams.

Therefore, into the harbor of Tripoli, in the golden land of Trebizond, many, many months thereafter, crawled a crippled caravel, with her sails of white samite all tattered and hanging in raveling ribbons, her mast a splinter, and aboard two grisly ones, Starvation and Death, who had not shipped from that fair Provençal shore where *Geoffrey* ruled—Provence, home of the troubadours, where the ripening olives, like little balls of silver, lie along the sky line. Those grim specters had come to replace the many of the crew that had fallen under the arms of the black corsairs of Mahound who had beset the caravel's course; to replace those whom the black pestilence had marked for his own, and also those faint hearts whom hunger found easy prey.

Those others who remained, true souls and poetic, were kept alive by the chanting of the wonders of *Geoffrey's* princess, both by the dying *Geoffrey*

and by *Bertram*, his brother in arms; ceasing to live by bread alone, and pulling at their galley oars with wasted arms, stimulated by nothing save imaginaries.

And when finally the dawn broke, pink and pearly, to show the cream-crested waves breaking gently against the rock-bound castle of *Melisinda*, on Tripoli's tawny coast, *Erasmus*, *Geoffrey's* leech, said the prince could not live till sunset, nor could he be trusted to a tossing boat to carry him ashore; so *Geoffrey* called *Bertram*, his brother in arms, and bade him go to the remote princess, and tell her that one who had journeyed far upon love's pilgrimage was dying in sight of his lady's shrine; therefore would she not come to the crippled caravel to lay her hand in his before death took it in a lasting grasp?

So *Bertram* went, in armor and with waving plume, to lay that plea before the lady. But all around her castle were the guard of the *Emperor Manuel*, commanded by a grim giant, the *Knight of the Verdant Armor*, who closed the castle gates in *Bertram's* face. But, with love of *Geoffrey* to strengthen an arm always powerful, *Bertram* carved his way through guards, and stretched the *Green Knight* dead, coming into the princess' presence sore wounded, but chanting the song of *Geoffrey Rudel*, which already had been brought to *Melisinda's* ears by those same palmer pilgrims of Antioch. And *Melisinda*, who had stood at her casement, watching this "gentil" knight fighting his way through many foes, felt the flame of love flicker about her; and straightway she believed him her perfect lover, *Geoffrey*, whom she had come to shrine as he shined her.

Desperate love *Bertram* made to her in behalf of his friend, until he fainted dead away. Then *Melisinda* told her maid that love had come at last, and kissed the senseless knight. He awoke at her magic touch, and prayed she come speedily to the caravel before *Geoffrey's* strength ebbed utterly away.

"You are not *Geoffrey*?"

"No."

"I will not come."

Now, before *Bertram* had left the ship, it was arranged that should *Geoffrey* die before *Bertram's* return, a black sail should hang from a masthead, and he, fearing each minute to see that sail displayed, called upon the princess to hear and accompany him; but *Melinda*, instead, spoke of her love for *Bertram*, and wooed and won him until he took her into his arms, crying his love.

And then were heard below strange shouts from serfs and men at arms that told of a sable sail upon a ship in Tripoli water. *Bertram* cried out against his temptress, saying she had made him a knight forsworn, and robbed his dying friend of what was more to him than dreams of heaven. He spoke of all the saintly things that *Geoffrey* was, and said that then between them, guilty lovers, would lie always the shadow of treachery and cowardice to poison their days, and make their nights long, shrinking horrors.

"The noblest knight in Christendom—betrayed!"

She, too, saw, and fell to weeping, and so they sat, each loathing love, for love had done this dreadful thing. And then the princess, staggering to the casement, saw that the sable sail had been upon another ship, and not upon the ship of *Geoffrey*; and, with loud cries of joy, both she and *Bertram* hastened to the sea.

Meanwhile, the prince had been kept alive by true belief in her; and when she came, and heard his dying words, making of her a thing more wonderful than any woman of humankind, a great desire came upon her to be like this wondrous creature he had believed so truly real, and for love of whom he had kept alive in that long, parlous journey. So, when she had closed his eyes, she vowed herself to him always, her spirit lover, and sent *Bertram* and his men to fight for the Holy Sepulcher, and plant the Cross where now the Crescent waved upon the walls of Jaffa and Jerusalem. So *Bertram* went, purified by suffering and contrition, and she returned to Tripoli to be in flesh what *Geoffrey, Prince of Provence*, had only

dreamed of. Hereafter then to be a dream come true.

That this play should be described at such length, and in a style hastily contrived to impart some slight suggestion of the willful extravagance of the romantics of the Golden Age, is, we believe, the least justice that can be done a work of Edmond Rostand, the foremost of all who write romanticism for the stage to-day.

That the play in its English form, although done by a hand as masterfully sentimental as that of the author of "Pomander Walk" and "Rosemary," lacks those ringing qualities of *beaux vers*, those sounding musical crescendos and diminuendos of word rhythm that brought it great applause when Sarah Bernhardt was "The Remote Princess" at the Theatre Renaissance, in Paris, many years ago, is reluctantly admitted. Also, there can be no doubt that Madame Simone, with her quick, simian, modern little manner, is no lady of dreams, but a very actual person, with monkey-like tricks of reality. Nor is she "wondrous beautiful," but a most capable artist, appealing to the intellect rather than the imagination, and, with wig and short stature, failing to realize the physical possibilities of the part as fully as the imaginative.

For this triplet of reasons, many metropolitan critics, with customary lack of categorical reasoning power, have put forward the utterly unsynthetic opinion that the play is nonsense, balderdash, perfumed banality, and utter rot—to quote a few of the more elegant (!) appellations. It is conceivable that those who rave over "Bought and Paid For" would not find appreciation for "La Princesse Lointaine."

Perhaps, also, a fourth reason exists for giving a play by the author of "Cyrano De Bergerac," "L'Aiglon," and "Chantecler," explanation so extended. Certainly, to expatiate on Edmond Rostand is preferable to damning with faint praise such verdant viands as "The Truth Wagon," "The Fatted Calf," and "The Opera Ball." The first two of this collection were written by amateurs, and, strong as the

desire is within every worthy commentator of the drama to laud the new man, it must be confessed that Messrs. Hayden Talbot and Arthur Hopkins have shown little or no dramaturgic ability.

"The Truth Wagon" tells, with an attempt at taking the whole affair seriously, the idea used by W. S. Gilbert and William J. Locke for extravaganzas—viz., that a person—or persons—is placed in a position where the absolute truth must be told at all hazards for a certain length of time. Now, as our lives are made up of small prevarications, white fibs, and occasionally black lies, one knows from the outset that any one using this idea will evolve, through sheer inability to check them, some perfunctory laughs. In this case—"The Truth Wagon"—Mr. Talbot gives two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to an irrepressible liar, a three months' contract to mend his mendacity, and a newspaper to buy with his quarter of a million, called *The Truth*, which he runs for three months on its titular principle. He increases the circulation by many multiples, defeats Tammany Hall, and elects a rank outsider to the chief executive's chair of the Empire State.

Unfortunately for struggling newspaper editors and honest rank outsiders with gubernatorial ambitions, Mr. Talbot does not tell how these things are done; they happen off stage, or between acts; the acts themselves being devoted chiefly to the antics and slang of tough copy boys and drunken reporters, and the reformed liar's flirtations with a female reporter. There are a number of amusing moments, which seem accidental, some accurate information about how a newspaper is run—a subject upon which every young writer is mighty superior, because it is the one and only thing about which he knows more than the general public—and a line here and there quite clever. But the play has neither coherence, characterization, nor a cogent reason for being.

"The Fatted Calf," by Arthur Hop-

kins, betrayed even less knowledge of stage requirements; but it did have an idea worth better dramatization, and some philosophy that gives hope for Mr. Hopkins in some field of literary endeavor, perhaps even in the one he has apparently chosen, if he will work harder. It shows farcically how two silly parents have hounded a girl into neurasthenia because of their ultra-anxiety for her health, and it finished, quite logically, by curing the girl by the mere exercise of mind-over-matter common sense. Written as a novelette, this story would be both profitable and interesting.

"The Greyhound," which finished a month of mediocrity, proved to be more of a dachshund. It was *long* enough, but it did not "course" very fast. It was packed, jammed, crammed, and press-downed with incident, linked together as slenderly as a series of magazine stories about a common hero, and distinguished only by that Miznerian slangy humor that is in anything in which Mizner has a hand. In justice to Mr. Mizner, it must be stated that, while he lay ill, the hand of Paul Armstrong, his collaborator, worked singly upon the script, so that had Mizner been able to attend the first performance of the play in New York, it is doubtful if he would have wholly recognized the piece that found some favor in Chicago.

"The Greyhound" gives five simple and elemental lessons in how to rob, cheat, and, in general, indulge in skullduggery; with special reference to the exercise of these tricks while passengers are gently idling on a great ocean liner. There is an amusing game of cards, in which two card sharps are cheated by a third, a dark horse, while they are attempting to make hash of the prospects of innocent participants in a "friendly game." Other incidents, such as an original bit of forgery, and a rather raw piece of blackmail, lend interest. In fact, if the incidents were resultant upon some theme, there would be much to favor "The Greyhound's" chance of a run.



What the Editor Has to Say

IMAGINATION, the narrative gift, the ability to write good English, the habit of observation—all these things help, but they do not make, the novelist. To write a story really worth reading and remembering requires something more—experience of life, and some knowledge of character and human nature. This last qualification is the rarest. To know people as they are beneath the surface, to divine and understand their hidden motives, needs a sympathy and feeling possessed by very few. A really big, strong, dramatic story must have in it character as well as incident. The conflict must be between different types of character. It is this element that makes the drama of life itself, and gives fiction its vitality and strength.



YOU will find this quality in the new serial story by Grace MacGowan Cooke, the first installment of which appears in the next issue of SMITH'S. Grace MacGowan Cooke is one of the foremost of the newer generation of writers of fiction. Her books, "The Power and the Glory," "Huldah," and "The Return," have all enjoyed a wide success, both in their serial publication and as books. Her latest story, which you will read in SMITH'S, represents the highest standard of her work. It is a real American novel, strong, vital, compelling in its interest.

IT is called "The Joy Bringer," and is a tale of the famous Painted Desert of Arizona. In it you will meet with genuine men and women who really think and feel and act. And besides this, you will find breathing through the stirring narrative the atmosphere of the Western desert. The author can make you feel the hot sunlight, see the marvelous colors of sand and rock. You learn to know the flat-roofed houses of the Indian village of Oraibi, and sympathize with those who dwell in them. The tale set against this vivid background is the story of a girl awakened suddenly and rudely to the deeper emotions of womanhood, and of the three men who influence her life. We have published many good serials in SMITH'S, but none any better than this. Owing to the increased size of the magazine, it will be possible for us to give you this story in larger installments than usual.



BEGINNING with the next issue of the magazine, Edwin L. Sabin will contribute to each number a short sermon. You already know Sabin by his "co-ed" stories as a bright and humorous spinner of yarns about the adolescent of both sexes. You will learn also that he is a kindly and wise philosopher, whose gift of humor lends point and sparkle to his wisdom, and whose sermons never put the reader to sleep, and are never too long. His first ser-

mon, in the next number, coming out the first of June, suits the season. It is advice "To Him About to Marry."



YOU doubtless remember Nalbro

Bartley for her novel, "The Tinsel Queen," which appeared in the December number of SMITH'S. She has written for the next number another novel, considerably longer, and, in our opinion, a better and stronger story. It will appear complete in the single number of the magazine, and is called "Shadows." It is the story of a German girl, an acrobat in a troupe of vaudeville performers who have toured Europe and who finally appear in America; of her first unfortunate love affair with a young American of good family and wealth, who has met her in Spain; and of the other bigger, finer love affair that takes its place and makes a happy woman of a discontented one. It is a real romance; the background of the theatrical life is sordid at times, but the girl never is. She is bright, educated, and altogether charming; and, what is more, has a strength and sweetness of character more potent to hold the fancy than any outward charm. It is an unusual story in every way, and when you read it you will feel like thanking us for publishing it.



WE wonder if you remember Marion

Short's story of "The Famous Cochran Children," those musical prodigies with the enterprising and capable mother? You will find another story about them in the July SMITH'S. It is called "Mrs. Farendell's Musicales," and we like it better than any that have preceded it, for in this instance

the Cochrans win a notable triumph, and really mount the first rung of the ladder that leads to musical success. There is a good deal of humor in these stories by Marion Short; there is also observation and tenderness and pathos.



IN the midst of one of the best collections of short fiction you have ever found between two covers, you will see an essay by Hildegard Lavender, entitled "Society Manners in Two Genders." Read it—it won't be any trouble—and it will be worth while. Indeed, if you start it you will find it a trouble to put it aside before you have finished it. Until we read it, we imagined that of the two—men and women—the women had the better manners, but Miss Lavender thinks otherwise and appears to prove her case.



THERE'S a splendid New England story by Grace Margaret Gallaher in the next number. Also there's an unusual story of domestic life by Ruth Kauffman, and delightful love stories by Virginia Middleton and Gardner Hunting. There is another funny story by Holman F. Day, and more humorous verse by Wallace Irwin. There's the second and concluding part of W. B. M. Ferguson's story, "The Substitute." There are also stories by Alma Martin Estabrook, Louise Rand Bascom, Joseph Ivers Lawrence, and others. The number now in your hands is the first issue of SMITH'S in its new and enlarged form. We think it one of the best numbers we have ever issued. Do you agree with us, and do you like the change?



Boudoir Confidences

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

IN the great cities—London, Paris, Berlin, New York—one sees hundreds, yes, thousands, of young persons—girls, in fact—frightfully “made up”; the eyebrows are penciled; lips rouged a vivid red; face heavily powdered; and the hair, if not colored, worn in some conspicuously grotesque fashion. Why do they do this? It is most difficult to answer. It does not seem possible that these young people are under the impression that such obvious artificiality deceives onlookers into the belief that they are gazing upon ravishing beauties. The attention these self-deluded women call upon themselves is notice which no self-respecting woman desires.

There are times when the legitimate use of a little “make-up” is not only necessary, but beneficial. Young people, however, should require little, if any, artificial aids to an everyday toilet; and among women of breeding it is the most scrupulous cleanliness, with minute consideration of every detail, that stamps them with the seal of inborn refinement, and an “air,” a charm, of distinct individuality.

One does not blame these girls for wishing to possess a finely grained, transparent skin, abundant tresses, clear, sparkling eyes, soft, lovely lips that reveal perfectly kept teeth as they slowly curve and dimple into smiles, beautifully kept hands, and a walk indicative of healthy, well-shod feet. No. One blames their shortsightedness in simulating what they do not possess, instead of devoting the same time to the cultivation of *natural* beauties. These bespeak minute attention to the minor details of the toilet, and are within the reach of every woman long past middle life, if she but values these treasures in the days of her youth, and cares for

them as zealously as she longs to when they are faded and gone.

A beautiful, natural complexion is rarely seen; at least, among city dwellers. The skin is affected by dense populations; the high temperatures maintained in our houses, and the lack of free ventilation in our sleeping apartments, are also very injurious to it. In fact, our entire mode of living is artificial, and the skin, being a most delicate, sensitive organ, shows the wear and tear of all this very early in life, unless the effect is counteracted by agents that not only prevent the drying-out process, but soften and nourish the tissues as well.

Muddy, discolored, and blotchy complexions call attention to the liver and a sluggish intestinal tract. A splendid corrective of these disorders is a salt recently introduced among physicians by a pharmaceutical house. This salt differs from the regulation Carlsbad, Epsom, sodium phosphate, and other familiar salts, in that it is a combination of well-known uric-acid solvents, and makes a palatable, agreeable drink, very potent in its effects, clearing the system of accumulated debris, and stirring up the functional activities of the body to a really wonderful degree. Chemists have been experimenting for years with salts of all descriptions, with a view of obtaining something that would clarify the blood and rid the system of waste, without creating nausea and other unpleasant conditions. It seems that this new salt meets this great need.

All effort made to correct complexion ills of any kind must begin from within—to clear out the system and to purify the blood. Those interested in these matters—and what real woman is not?—must be endlessly confused by the mass of stuff published in newspapers and in every available journal, giving

advice, recipes, treatments, and what not, that are warranted to give one a magical complexion overnight. Let me assure my readers that it requires weeks, even months, of untiring effort to rehabilitate a system that has been poisoned for years with effete matter; and very few city dwellers are free from this condition.

The explanation lies in the fact that they eat rich, heavy foods, and have little or no exercise in God's out of doors. A country life, with simple fare and plenty of tramping in the open air, acts like a pair of bellows upon a fire in a furnace, quickly burning it up. It does not lie there, and throw out gases, and form clinkers, and choke up the drafts; but that's another story. Still, it has more to do with the state of our skins than anything else, and, therefore, one cannot be too impressive upon this point.

On the question of local treatment, so much nonsense is habitually written that women who do not really know are in a maze of doubt as to just how to proceed. We are taught that cleanliness is next to Godliness. No one doubts it; therefore, the skin must be kept clean. The skin upon the face, is more sensitive than that upon the body, so we cannot "go at it" quite so vigorously, or with the same materials. Any good bath soap, and a heavy flesh brush or loofa mitts, run over the body from chin to toes every day, followed by a brisk rubdown with a coarse Turkish towel, not only keeps the skin sweet and clean, but relieves the internal organs of extra work in eliminating waste, for the skin acts precisely like the lungs and kidneys; it throws off *débris*.

For the face, a blander soap, a softer brush, or other more delicate materials are necessary. Some skins that are finely grained can be cleaned with cleansing creams or meals; but it is obviously impossible to thoroughly rid the average complexion of a day's accumulation of city grime without the use of warm water, bland soap, and either the tips of the fingers or a very fine brush. Some women can stand a pretty stiff brush on the face, others require

one made of camel's hair, and others do not like to use any. It is not a matter of taste, but of tolerance. A baby can stand the average complexion brush, and many, with sensible mothers, do.

One does not attack the face as one does the floor. A good, well-made complexion brush, that is thoroughly rinsed after using and hung up in the sun afterward, is the best means of cleaning the face, and of building up a fine complexion by ridding it of all impurities and contracting the pores. It should be applied lightly at first, and, as the skin grows accustomed to it, more force and energy can be used. After the face is cleaned, it should be given an oil bath. This oil face bath forms a part of every Frenchwoman's nightly toilet. Refined olive oil is preferred by them.

It is amusing to hear this referred to as a new treatment, or as "the quiet treatment." As a matter of fact, it has been pursued by generations of French-American women throughout the South, whose ancestors brought the idea over here centuries ago. It consists merely in soaking a square of flannel in warm olive oil, and laying it upon the face like a mask; the skin, previously cleaned, gratefully absorbs the warm oil; the flannel imparts warmth and heat, and causes a gentle perspiration. If an hour is given up to the treatment tired lines disappear, the skin is nourished and freshened; indeed, revived.

When wrinkles have already formed, more urgent means are called for. A good cold cream, containing tissue feeders, will prove of great value. The following cold cream, known in France as *Crème Céleste*, is sometimes very beneficial:

Spermaceti	2 ounces
White wax.....	2 ounces
Sweet almond oil.....	9¼ ounces
Stronger rose water.....	3 ounces
Pulverized borax.....	35 grains

Reduce the spermaceti and white wax to fine shavings, and melt them at a moderate heat, add the oil and stir, continuing the heat until the mixture is uniform, then gradually add the rose water, previously warmed and in which the borax has been dissolved, stirring

the mixture rapidly and continuously until it congeals and becomes of uniform consistence. Now, this is one of the most elegant cold creams known, and sells in smart beauty shops at fabulous prices. The formula given here makes a large quantity, and can be put up in half or quarter that amount.

So simple a thing as mutton suet has been proven an invaluable means of preserving a fine complexion and of restoring a bad one. One of the most famous beauty actresses known uses it constantly in the cream she applies to her face and throat. Among English women, rosemary, as a stimulant to the skin, not only of the face and general body, but of the scalp, too, is in great favor. *Crème Céleste*, being a simple cold cream, can be varied by the addition of mutton suet and oil, or spirit of rosemary. To make a firmer tissue builder that will be unequalled in the results gained by its daily application, use half the quantity of sweet almond oil, and half that amount of fresh mutton suet, and ten to twenty drops of oil of rosemary.

Women who have had little time, or who have given little thought to the preservation of their good looks, find the muscles of the face, especially of the chin and throat, beginning to sag very early in life. Indeed, these are almost the first heralds of encroaching years. As a rule, they go unheeded until they become so evident that we wake some morning to find ourselves not famous, but faded.

How can these sagging tissues be restored? Astringent lotions applied on ice-cold bandages is undoubtedly the surest means. Hand massage is good; but so few women can give it to themselves correctly, and bad massage is worse than none. Of astringent lotions there are many. It is the method of using these particular lotions that will be found beneficial.

Alum $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
Alcohol $\frac{1}{2}$ pint
constitutes one of the best, and is applied as follows:



Iced compresses with astringent lotions for sagging tissues.

The bandage is laid on a piece of ice and thoroughly chilled. The astringent is sprinkled on until it is well dampened. It is then bound over the muscles to be treated. Plain iced compresses, or bits of ice rubbed well over the muscles to be shrunken, is also effectual. The secret lies in pursuing measures long enough to gain results. The shock of the cold, together with the astringent lotion, acts as a sharp contracting agent, at the same time imparting tone to the muscles.

In using powder on the face, it should be dusted on lightly with a bit of absorbent cotton, never rubbed into the pores with a so-called powder puff. This is a most careless and pernicious habit. Powder puffs are germ collectors. The powder when rubbed in fills and clogs the pores so that they cannot fail to enlarge horribly in time; and lastly, but by no means least, most of the perfumed powders that sell for high prices contain injurious matter, notably zinc oxide and bismuth. Now, these are all right in their



To keep the hands soft and white rub them with soap powder.

place, but they are not necessary in a face powder; the sole idea of their use in this way is to make a heavy substance that will adhere to the skin. On some these drugs react with the perspiration, and form a new chemical compound that is harmful. The so-called baby powder is preferred by many women. It is made of finely powdered rice, and may or may not contain powdered orris root and a drop or two of essential oil to perfume it.

A beautifully kept mouth is appreciated by every one that sees it. Yet, strange as it may seem, the hygiene of the oral cavity is given comparatively little thought. When the head is thrown back in laughter, there may be displayed a coated tongue, teeth in various stages of decay, spaces that should be filled with bridge work, pale and receding gums; and quite frequently to all this is added a heavy breath. The tongue requires daily attention. It is a capital plan to use whalebone upon it in the morning, and remove the coating that has formed during the night.

Always after eating remove particles of food that cannot be dislodged with the toothbrush, by means of dental floss or a rubber band; many prefer the latter. The rapid formation of tartar points to acid instead of alkaline secretions of the mouth; and here the salt already referred to again plays an important rôle, as it will do much to correct this condition.

Alkaline mouth washes must be frequently used; and one that is also an astringent to harden the gums, and disinfectant as well, contains:

Sacharin	15 grains
Bicarbonate of soda.....	15 grains
Salicylic acid.....	1 dram
Alcohol	6 ounces

Mix. Use a few drops in a small glass of water.

Massage of the gums will do much to stimulate the circulation, give them a healthy color, and prevent them from receding.

The teeth can be polished like ivory, or any hard substance of similar character; and if this is done with a bit of white flannel and ruby nail polish, it will add to their brilliancy and beauty.

Scrupulous attention to the hands keeps them in good condition. The necessity for washing them a hundred and one times a day, as is the case with many, dries out the skin and ages the hand prematurely. A soap powder has been found a delightful substitute for ordinary soap.

WHITENING SKIN POWDER.

Powdered marshmallow root.....	2 ounces
Carbonate of soda.....	2 ounces
Barley meal.....	12 ounces

Mix. Use as soap powder. This powder has the double advantage of cleansing and whitening, and can also be used on the face.

Attend to the nails every day; they will then always look well, and the actual work of manicuring will be greatly facilitated. A little lemon juice rubbed into them removes stains, while it bleaches and whitens as well. The cuticle should be pushed down with an orange stick or the towel until the delicate crescents show. Do not wear the

(Continued on Page 506)



Hot—Tired—Thirsty!

When you seat yourself at the fountain,
one name inevitably comes to your mind,

Coca-Cola

The one best beverage to cool and refresh
you. Remember Coca-Cola is not only pure
and wholesome but

**Delicious — Refreshing
Thirst-Quenching**

Demand the Genuine as made by
THE COCA-COLA CO., Atlanta, Ga.

Free Our new booklet, telling of
Coca-Cola vindication at
Chattanooga, for the asking.

Whenever you see an Arrow
think of Coca-Cola.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

nails much longer than the finger, and curve them an oval shape. Sharply pointed nails are vulgar. A nail ointment for softening the cuticle, and curing hangnails and the like, is made of:

White petrolatum.....1 ounce
Powdered white castile soap.....1 dram
Oil of bergamot.....5 drops

Many preparations for polishing the nails are on the market. Here is an excellent one that can be made at home:

Eosin10 grains
White wax.....½ dram
Spermaceti½ dram
Paraffin wax.....1 ounce

With the advent of warm weather, the feet usually become troublesome. Swelling is the most frequent condition requiring special treatment at this time.

FOR SWOLLEN FEET.

Alum1 ounce
Rock salt.....2 ounces
Powdered borax.....2 ounces

Two heaping tablespoonfuls of this powder to a basin of water, and used as a foot bath, will generally afford great relief.

Tired, achy feet are helped by spraying them with toilet vinegar after a foot bath.

An antiseptic powder used upon perspiring surfaces, either the feet or any other part of the body, is a very necessary adjunct to every one's toilet table. This is an excellent formula:

ANTISEPTIC POWDER.

Salicylic acid.....22½ grains
Zinc oxide.....½ ounce
Orris root.....1 ounce
Talcum3½ ounces
Cumarin½ grain
Oil of bergamot.....5 drops
Oil of rose.....10 drops
Tincture of musk.....2½ drops
Solution of carmine—enough to color.

Many dainty women love the addition of a perfumed powder to their daily bath. The following is simple, inexpensive, and delightful:

Borax12 ounces
Sodium bicarbonate.....4 ounces
Potassium carbonate.....2 ounces
Oil of rosemary.....30 drops
Oil of orange.....1 dram
Oil of lavender flowers.....1 dram

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



For cleansing the blood and system of impurities nothing equals a uric acid solvent.

Mix the salts thoroughly with the oils, and keep in a well-stoppered, wide-mouthed bottle.

In using, mix a tablespoonful with the bath, or a half tablespoonful with a basin of water for the face.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

A. M.—Nothing will stop growth of hair except destruction of the hair follicles by means of electrolysis. Equal parts of peroxide of hydrogen and ammonia water will bleach and in time destroy the hair so that it falls off. In this way a light growth can be checked.

Heroic measures are needed to remove "brown spots from old sores." Try this French ointment:

Cocoa butter.....10 grams
Castor oil.....10 grams
Oxide of zinc.....20 centigrams
White precipitate.....10 centigrams
Essence of rose—to perfume.

Apply to the spots night and morning. If it irritates, rub in a little bland cream. It removes the spots by peeling off the skin.

It is not alone the convenience, or the freshness, or the crispness, or the unusual food-value, or the digestibility, or the cleanliness, or the price, that has made Uneeda Biscuit the National Soda Cracker.

It is the remarkable combination of all of these things.

If everyone, everywhere, knew how good they are, everyone, everywhere, would eat them—every day.

Sold by grocers in every city and town. Bought by people of all classes.

Always 5 cents in the moisture-proof package.

**NATIONAL BISCUIT
COMPANY**

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- ¶ Many in Society have written.
- ¶ But very few in Society have written of Society.
- ¶ Mr. Frederick Townsend Martin's reminiscences, which begin in the June number of Ainslee's form an informal but authoritative history of American society from the simpler days of our fathers, down to the Bradley Martin ball.
- ¶ The fiction feature of this same number will be

"CONNIE"

a brilliant, sparkling novel, by

MARION HILL

¶ Margaretta Tuttle contributes the opening story of a new "Nadine Carson" series. Other entertaining short stories of distinction are by Andrew Soutar, Parker H. Fillmore, Anna Alice Chapin, Edgar Saltus, Herman Whitaker, Thomas P. Byron, William Slavens McNutt, Virginia Kline, Nalbro Bartley and F. Berkeley Smith.

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On sale May 15

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To achieve that purpose the I. C. S. has a working capital of many millions of dollars, owns and occupies three large buildings, covering seven acres of floor space, and employs 3000 trained people, all of whom have one object in view—to make it easy for you and all poorly-paid men to earn more. Truly then—the *business of this place is to raise salaries*.

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The same opportunity now knocks at your door. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to lock the door in its face and lag along at the same old wages, or are you going to open the door and give the I. C. S. a chance to show you? Perhaps you don't see how, but the I. C. S. does. That is its business—to *raise your salary*.

Here is all you have to do. From the list in the attached coupon select the position you prefer, and mark and mail the coupon today. It costs you nothing but the stamp to learn how the I. C. S. can raise *your salary*.

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Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

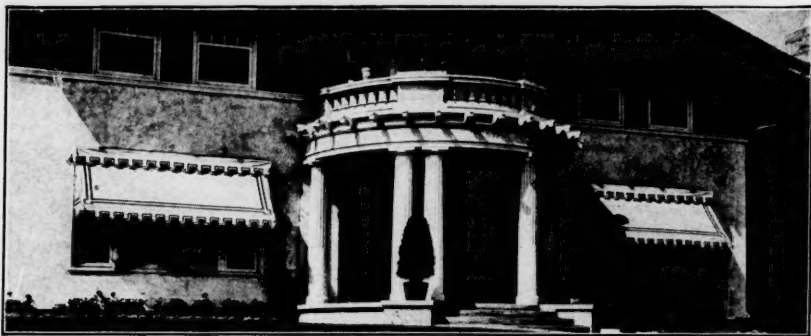
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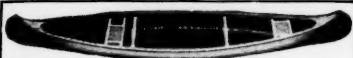
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LET ME COME

If you are going to build a home, church, library, school, office building or public building of any kind, or especially if you want to lay out a model town-site, private estate or residential tract, or contemplate a city-beautiful campaign, let me come and see you at my expense on one of my quarterly coast-to-coast trips and get your exact requirements.



Architect HERBERT C.



Mullins Cedar Canoes Can't Sink

Each end contains a Mullins Buoyancy Pad. These pads prevent the canoe from sinking, even though it be capsized, water-filled, and has two people clinging to it. The Mullins is the only canoe that has this important equipment. We also manufacture steel launches and row boats.

Write for our beautiful boat book, illustrated in colors. It's free, postpaid.

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for this Craftsman settee No. 12—solid quarter-sawn oak—Marokene leather cushion—67 in. long, 37½ in. high, 21 in. deep. Strong, handsome. Guaranteed. Finished as you wish. Shipped in complete sections. Easily assembled.

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Model "Ranger" bicycle furnished by us. Our agents everywhere are making money fast. Write at once for full particulars and special offer. **NO MONEY REQUIRED** until you receive and approve of your bicycle. We ship to anyone, anywhere in the U. S. without a cent deposit in advance, *prepay freight*, and allow **TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL** during which time you may ride the bicycle and put it to any test you wish. If you are then not perfectly satisfied or do not wish to keep the bicycle you may ship it back to us at our expense and *you will not be out one cent.*

LOW FACTORY PRICES

We furnish the highest grade bicycles it is possible to make at one small profit above the actual factory cost. You save \$10 to \$25 middlemen's profits by buying direct of us and have the manufacturer's guarantee behind your bicycle. **DO NOT BUY a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price** until you receive our catalogues and learn our unheard of factory prices and remarkable special offer.

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when you receive our beautiful catalogue and study our superb models of bicycles at lower prices than any other factory. We are satisfied with \$1.00 profit above factory cost. **DEALERS**, you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received.

SECOND HAND BICYCLES

—a limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at \$1 to \$8 each. Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER BRAKE

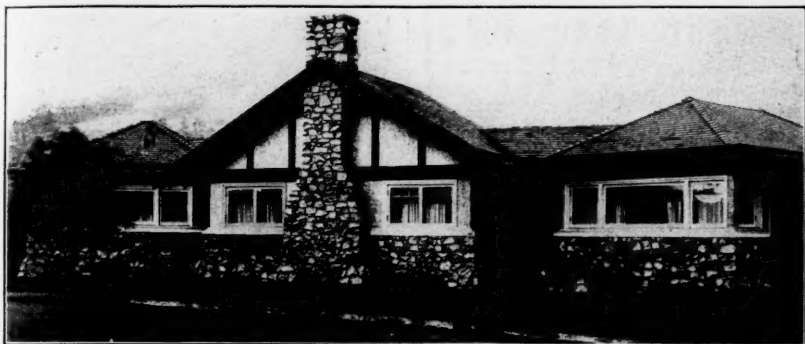
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AND SEE YOU

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You need no experience if you use a

PREMO

Each one is fitted with a carefully tested lens—the best in its grade that is made, and an accurate, automatic shutter.

Premo Film Pack Film is daylight loading, tank developing, and is made from the same stock as the Eastman Non-curling—the best in the world.

It is obvious that you can make *at least* as good pictures with a Premo as can be had. Premos range in price from \$1.50 to \$150, and—

Premos are the smallest, the lightest, the easiest to load and operate of all cameras, and the nearest dealer will prove it to you.

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EASTMAN KODAK CO. ROCHESTER, N. Y.

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First Step
Holds Your Sock Smooth as Your Skin

Made in two styles shown here.

Sold Everywhere

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Every pair Guaranteed

SILK, 50c.
LISLE, 25c.

Sample pair sent post-paid on receipt of price.

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As a result of remarkable invention, a modern, standard keyboard typewriter is now being built, in the Elliott-Fisher Billing Machine Factory, with only 250 parts. Other machines have 1700 to 3700. This typewriter—THE BENNETT PORTABLE—weighs but 7½ lb., and can be readily carried in grip or pocket. Its wonderful simplicity enables us to sell it for \$18. Sold on money-back-unless-satisfied guarantee. Over 50,000 in daily use. WRITE FOR CATALOG and agents terms. in U.S.A.

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Illustrated with 20 full-page half-tone cuts, showing exercises that will quickly develop, beauty, and gain great strength in your shoulders, arms, and hands, without any apparatus.

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because it is the only motorcycle of the year which has all of the desirable 1912 improvements.

To be up to date, you cannot ignore one of these

IMPORTANT YALE ADVANTAGES

More drop forgings than any other motorcycle; the V-A Shock Absorber "that Absorbs the Shock" 2½ in. Studded Tires, Auto Fender Mud Guards, Eclipse Free Engine Clutch, Pull High Forks, Eccentric Yoke, Triple Anchored Handle-Bars, Muffler Cut-chemical Oil on Twins.

Yale 1912 literature, describing the four new Yale models; 4 H. P. to 7 H. P. is ready—ask for it.

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"FOR MINE"

Mennen's Borated Talcum Powder

keeps my skin in healthy condition.

Sample Box for 4c. stamp.

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Trade Mark

WHITE VALLEY GEMS IMPORTED from FRANCE

SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING!

These gems are chemical white sapphires—LOOK like Diamonds. Stand acid and fire diamond tests. So hard they easily scratch a file and will cut glass. Brilliantly guaranteed 25 years. All mounted in 14K solid gold diamond mountings. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud for examination—all charges prepaid—no money in advance. Write today for free illustrated booklet, special prices and ring measure. WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., Dept. F, 709 Saks Building, Indianapolis, Ind.



I TRUST YOU TEN DAYS. SEND NO MONEY. \$2 Hair Switch Sent on Approval. Choice of Natural wavy or straight hair. Send a lock of your hair, and I will mail a 22 inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big bargain remit \$2 in ten days, or sell 3 and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shade a little more. Include 4c postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade wigs, pampadours, wigs, puffs, etc. Women wanted to sell my hair goods.

ANNA AYERS, Dept. A500, 23 Quincy St., Chicago

Discouraged About Your Complexion?

Cosmetics only make it worse and do not hide the pimples, freckles, blackheads or red spots on face or nose.

Dr. James P. Campbell's

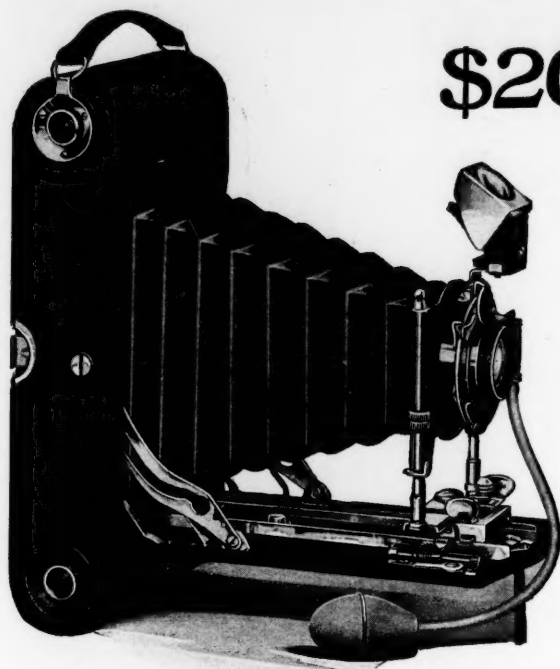
Safe Arsenic Complexion Waters will purify your blood, cleanse and beautify the skin, and give you a fresh and spotless complexion.

Use these absolutely safe and harmless waters for 30 days and then let your mirror praise the most wonderful beautifier of the complexion and figure known to the medical profession. Used by Beautiful Women for 27 years.

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We guarantee as freshly packed and of full strength, only when boxes have Blue Wrapper, bearing our printed guarantee. Sold by all reliable druggists or sent by mail prepaid in plain cover from RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 54, 415 Broadway, New York City

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The pictures are post card size ($3\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches). The lens is a high grade rapid rectilinear, fast enough for snap shots in a hundredth part of a second on bright days.

The Shutter is the Kodak Ball Bearing, which works with remarkable smoothness and precision. It has automatic speeds of $\frac{1}{25}$, $\frac{1}{50}$ and $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second and also operates for "bulb" and time exposures. Has iris diaphragm stops and is fitted with indicator that registers each exposure as it is made. The camera body is made of aluminum covered with fine seal grain leather. Has reversible finder, tripod sockets for both vertical and horizontal exposures; automatic focusing lock and a rising and sliding front. Loads in daylight with Kodak film cartridges. No dark room for any of the operations of loading the camera or finishing the pictures. Kodak simplicity and Kodak quality all the way through. Price, \$20.00

Catalogue of Kodaks free at the dealers or by mail.

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By Cuticura Soap and Ointment

For red, rough, chapped and bleeding hands, itching, burning palms, and painful finger-ends, with shapeless nails, a one-night Cuticura treatment works wonders. Directions: Soak the hands, on retiring, in hot water and Cuticura Soap. Dry, anoint with Cuticura Ointment, and wear soft bandages or old, loose gloves during the night.



Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 133, Boston.

TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. At stores or by mail, 50c.

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A Most Beautiful Brown. Send for a Trial Package.



"You'd never think I stained my hair after I use Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain. The Stain doesn't hurt the hair as dyes do, but leaves it nice and fluffy, with a beautiful brown color."

It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, doesn't rub off, it is free from lead, sulphur, silver and all metallic compounds. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain sealed wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Potter's Hygienic Supply Co., 1542 Groton Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Guaranteed Five Years

You are the sole judge of these-
gals and its
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Greatest Engine
Bargain ever offered.
Nothing complicated
or liable to get out of order.
Waterproof ignition
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Only 3 Moving Parts.

Starts without cranking. Reverses while in motion.

Demonstrator Agents wanted in every boating community. Special wholesale prices on the first outfit sold. Single cyl. 2-3 h. p.; double cyl. 5-30 h. p.; 4 cyl. 30-50 h. p. Suitable for any boat, canoe or cruiser. Also mill and traction car. All engines complete with boat fittings. Free Catalog.

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House Design No. 6.

Here is a house that has been built about 400 times. It is our Leader. Size 23 ft. x 33 ft. 6 in., contains 7 rooms, bath and spacious front porch. Designed with greatest care, using material without waste; therefore can be built so economically it will surprise you. A home of elegant appearance and splendid material. Standard solid construction; no make-shifts of any kind. A beautiful home at a splendid money saving price. Ask for Free Book of Plans No. 5, B-980. It explains our Great Building Offer. Tells all about the material, style of solid construction of our houses. Our prices are lower than you can possibly obtain anywhere else. Our prices include all BRAND NEW material needed to build this house, every bit of it, except Masonry, Plumbing, Heating and Paint.

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Plumbing and Heating Material at a 30 to 50 per cent saving. Our stock is all brand new and first-class. Write for our low prices.
CHICAGO HOUSE WRECKING CO., 35th and Iron Sts., Chicago

MAKE MONEY HERE



AGENTS! DROP DEAD ONES, AWAKE! GRAB THIS NEW INVENTION! THE 20TH CENTURY WONDER AGENTS!

Get started in an honest, clean, reliable, money-making business. Sold on a money-back guarantee

World's magical gift realized by this new invention. The **BLACKSTONE WATER POWER VACUUM MASSAGE MACHINE** for the home. No cost to operate. Lasts a life-time. Price within reach of all. No competition. New field. New business. That's why it's easy. Removes blackheads, wrinkles, rounds out any part of the face or body and brings back **Nature's beauty**. Endorsed by leading doctors and masseurs. **Lillian Parker, Ohio**, says, "I order first day." **Margaret, Pa.**, writes, "I am making \$10.00 per day." **Shea**, "First order 12, second 36, third 72." **Schmerhorn, Ind.**, orders eight dozen machines first month. **Shaffer, Va.**, "selling 4 out of 5 demonstrations." **Vaughn, Wash.**, orders one dozen. Four days later wires "Ship 6 dozen by first express." **Spain, Tenn.**, started with sample. Orders one dozen, then 2 dozen, next 3 dozen. **Lewis, Ind.**, sells 3 machines first hour. Says "Best article he ever saw for merit and money-making." No experience necessary. Territory with protection given free to active workers. Nothing in the world like it. Best agent's article ever invented. We own all U. S.

entitled, "The Power and the Love of Beauty and Health" Free. Investigate now, today. A Postal will do. A big surprise awaits you. Address **BLACKSTONE MFG. CO.** 462 Meredith Bldg., TOLEDO, O.

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Complete Launch

With Engine Ready to Run **\$94.50**

16, 18, 20, 23, 27, 28 and 35 footers at proportionate prices, including Family Launches, Speed Boats, Auto Boats and Hunting Cabin Cruisers. We are the world's largest Power Boat Manufacturers. A NEW PROPOSITION TO DEMONSTRATING AGENTS. Sixty-four different models in all sizes ready to ship, equipped with the simplest motors made; start without cranking; only three moving parts; ten-year-old child can run them. Boats and engines fully guaranteed. 12,500 satisfied owners. Write today for Free Illustrated Catalog. **DETROIT BOAT CO., 112 Jefferson Ave., DETROIT, MICH.**



YOU CAN BUILD THIS HANDSOME POWER BOAT

Only \$25 for knockdown frames, patterns, and instructions for this 23 footer—speed 9½ to 14 miles an hour. Everything made simple. Easy to build if you can handle hammer, saw and screw driver. We also furnish complete knockdown boat. Or patterns alone at from \$2 to \$19 according to design. Thousands of Brooks boats in use and building now. It's fun—and profit—and summer pleasure to build a boat.

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Today—just a postal. Mailed free. Scores of models and sizes of all kinds illustrated. Save ½ the boat builder's price. Get our offer. Address

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Flash Like Genuine BARODA DIAMONDS. ANY STYLE. at 1/40 the cost—12 SOLID GOLD RINGS. Stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first—then pay. Special Offer—14k Tiffany ring 1 ct. \$3.98. 6cts ring 1 ct. \$4.98. 14k Stud 1 ct. \$4.98. Sent C.O.D. for inspection. Catalog FREE shows full line. Patent ring gauges included, 10 cents. **Baroda Co., Dept. AS, Leland & Dyer St., Chicago**

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BIG BOOK FREE

Contains Instructions for Amateur Bands, Exercises and Scales, By-Laws, Selected List of Band Music. Write today!

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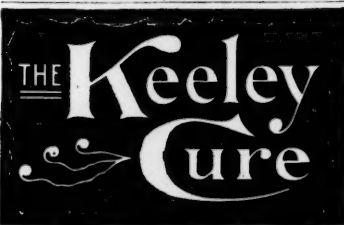


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Stuart's Plaster-Pads are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive purposely to hold the parts securely in place. No Straps, Buckles or Springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the pubic bone.

Thousands suffering from most obstinate cases, have successfully treated themselves in the privacy of the home without hindrance from work. **SOFT AS VELVET—EASY TO APPLY, INEXPENSIVE.** Awarded Gold Medal and Diploma, International Exposition, Rome. Process of recovery is natural, leaving no further use for the truss. We prove what we say by sending you a trial of Plapao absolutely Free.

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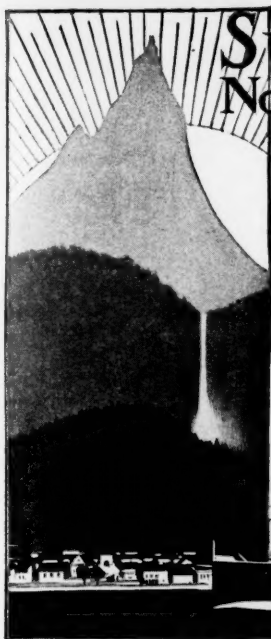
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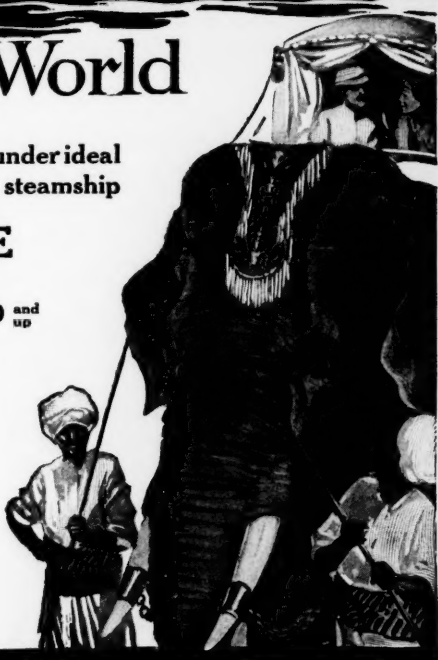
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The treatment used by millions is this:

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No soreness, no discomfort.

Fifty million corns have been ended in this way since this famous wax was invented.

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C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.

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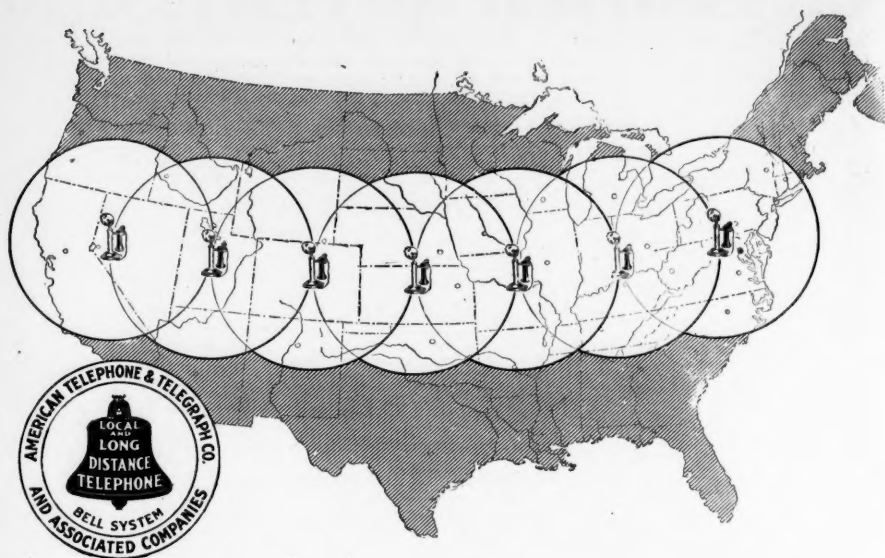
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